

# THE TIMES

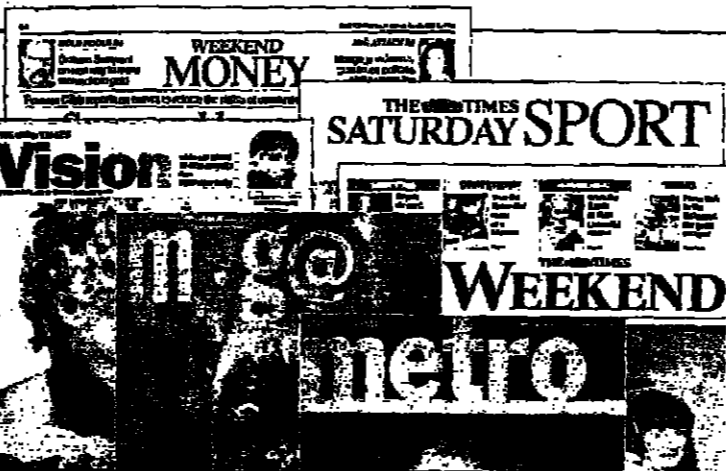
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## Blair trip clouded by Cook's love life

By PHILIP WEBSTER IN TOKYO, ANDREW PIERCE AND DOMINIC KENNEDY

DAMAGING revelations about Robin Cook's marriage overshadowed Tony Blair's visit to Japan yesterday and forced Downing Street to defend not only the Foreign Secretary, but also the Prime Minister and his officials. Margaret Cook has accused her husband of conducting several affairs during their 28-year marriage; claimed that he ended the marriage on instructions from the Prime Minister's press secretary, and complained that Mr Blair expressed no regrets over the collapse of the marriage in a handwritten note he sent her after the separation.

the *News of the World* has discovered his affair with his *Commons* secretary, Gaynor Regan, and urged him to make a decision about what he intended to say to about it.

But in spite of the damage-limitation exercise, the Foreign Secretary faces further embarrassment today with the publication in *The Times Magazine* of his wife's full interview and by his mother's first comments on the matter. Christina Cook, 85, who spent Christmas with her daughter-in-law, said: "Margaret is such a lovely girl who devoted her life to Robin and the boys. She made career sacrifices for him, only for this to happen when he becomes Foreign Secretary. It seems so unfair."

In her interview, Mrs Cook says that her husband was unable to cope with the pressure of living as an equal with a confident wife who was the family's main breadwinner until he entered the Cabinet and needed younger women who looked up to him.

Mrs Cook has told friends that she believed it was "payback time" when he became Foreign Secretary. But she enjoyed only one weekend at Chevening, his grace-and-favour mansion.

Mrs Cook gave her interview to Linda McDougall on August 31, a few weeks after the marriage broke up. Yesterday, she issued a statement saying: "The stories in today's press relate to things which were said a long time ago. I have no intention of making any further comment." Her husband — to whom she is believed to have spoken yesterday — had proved a distinguished Foreign Secretary, and other matters were of "no concern" to the public.

Mr Cook, who is delaying his divorce because of financial difficulties, was at the Foreign Office, which issued a statement saying: "Mr Cook said all he had to say about his marriage last August."

**'Margaret Cook knows very little about Robin's mistress. She refers to her as "that woman" and blames her for stealing her husband'**

The Magazine, page 26

covering Mr Blair's visit to Tokyo and prompted a flurry of statements from all the parties. Downing Street officials said Mr Blair was backing Mr Cook and tried to gloss over Mrs Cook's claims.

But the allegation of other relationships before the one that ultimately killed the marriage was not denied by the Foreign Office and sparked a hunt for the women involved. One was said to be linked with the Conservative Party and another a former Labour Party official.

Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, denied that he had ordered Mr Cook to end the marriage, although he agreed that he had warned him that



Margaret Cook riding near Edinburgh: she accused her husband Robin of having several affairs

## Memorial plan for Princess 'would be a disaster'

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND DAMIAN WHITWORTH

PLANS for a £10 million garden of remembrance for Diana, Princess of Wales, at Kensington Palace have been condemned as a "recipe for disaster" by residents of the royal borough.

The fear that proposals by the Royal Parks Agency for a modern floral garden attracting 5 million visitors a year amount to foisting a theme park on one of the most peaceful areas of the capital.

The scheme at the Princess's former home has also come under fire from Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage. He has echoed the residents' fears of a circus on their doorstep.

Amid an increasingly bitter battle over the nature of the memorial to the Princess, a committee chaired by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, will meet on Monday to discuss some 7,000 ideas for honouring her memory. The dispute over the garden appears likely to dominate proceedings.

In a letter to *The Times*, Sir Ronald Arculus, a former British Ambassador to Italy and the chairman of the Kensington Court Residents' Association, says that the parks agency plan will attract "hordes of tourists", bringing traffic jams, noise and litter.

Sir Jocelyn also sets out his reservations in a letter to today's *Times*. He says: "A memorial garden ... cannot provide for a frenzied variety of activities if it is to fulfil its prime role as a place of memory where people would be free ... to celebrate the Princess's brief life."

Letters, page 23

## Revenue urged to extend tax return deadline

By CAROLINE MERRELL

ACCOUNTANTS believe the Inland Revenue has mishandled the introduction of the self-assessment tax regime and are calling for the January 31 deadline for delivering tax returns to be put back by two months.

More than three million people have yet to return their forms and if they do not do so by the end of this month, the Treasury stands to make £300 million in instant fines.

But the Institute of Chartered Accountants, which represents more than 100,000 professionals, blames the Revenue itself for the shortfall and complains that tax staff were not given adequate training.

In a letter to *The Times*, the ICA's self-assessment monitoring group chairman Richard Shooter also says that the Government's advertising campaign featuring the cartoon tax inspector Hector was totally ineffective and that many taxpayers do not understand their increased responsibilities under self assessment.

As well as asking for the deadline to be moved, Mr Shooter calls for an urgent meeting between the Government and leading accountancy bodies.

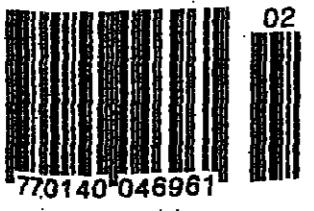
The Inland Revenue insisted, however, that the deadline would not be moved. It said it would be unfair on those who had dealt with their tax returns on time.

People whose returns arrive after the deadline will be subject to a £100 penalty, which will also apply if forms sent back because of errors are resubmitted late.

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## Revelations in Brown book start Labour feud

By NICHOLAS WOOD

A FEUD among senior Labour politicians erupted yesterday after publication of the first biography of Gordon Brown, extracts from which are being serialised in *The Times* beginning today.

The book by the political journalist Paul Routledge, written with the Chancellor's co-operation, accuses Peter Mandelson of trying to derail Mr Brown's hopes of being elected party leader in 1994.

But last night associates of Mr Mandelson, Tony Blair's most trusted lieutenant and now Minister without Portfolio, angrily denied the claims, accusing the Brown camp of reopening old wounds.

*Gordon Brown: the Biography* exposes the simmering personal rivalries in the Cabinet. It also discloses the Brown camp's belief that Mr Blair let him down by reneging on a secret pact not to stand against him for the leadership.

It concludes that Mr Brown sacrificed his personal ambitions because — although he thought he could win — he

was not prepared to risk a bloody fight that would harm Labour's election chances.

The new account is doubly embarrassing for Labour because it is clear that it has been written with the co-operation of Mr Brown and his senior aides and allies. Mr Brown gave a lengthy interview to the author.

Yesterday Mr Brown sought to lower the temperature. Charlie Whelan, his press secretary, denied that Mr Brown had "authorised" the book or that he had commented on claims that he felt betrayed by Mr Blair in the shadow boxing over the Labour leadership that followed the death of John Smith.

But a prominent Blairite minister said the idea that the book was not authorised by Mr Brown was "complete balls". Another critic of Mr Brown said that the book was "deliberately reopening old wounds to re-light a battle that was never actually fought, because Gordon never stood".

The book says that Mr

Mandelson wrote to Mr Brown when it was not certain who the candidates would be. According to Mr Routledge, the letter warned Mr Brown that if he stood against Mr Blair he would split the party. But at the same time, Mr Mandelson offered to front Mr Brown's campaign if he decided to run. "The offer was a cleverly worded invitation to stand aside for Blair."

Mr Mandelson refused to comment on what his allies called this latest "provocation". They said that he had never offered to front a leadership campaign for Mr Brown.

The book highlights other personal rifts, saying that Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, "would cross the road to have fight with Brown". Since taking over as Shadow Chancellor in 1994, Mr Brown had faced sniping from Mr Cook, who wanted his job. The book says that Mr Brown is "determined" that Mr Cook will not succeed him.

Brown's day of duty, page 21



## Naked ambition

Tony Blair used a speech to industrialists in Tokyo yesterday to voice his ambitions for Britain. The Prime Minister said he would go the "full monty" in modernising Britain and turning the country into an investment haven as a "model 21st century economy". Page 17

## Composer dies

The composer Sir Michael Tippett died peacefully yesterday at his home in west London. He was 93. Sir Michael, one of the best known figures in British music this century, had been ill for two months. Page 25

## Mowlam gamble pays off

By AUDREY MAGEE

MR MOWLAM'S gamble in meeting prisoners in the Maze yesterday appeared to have paid off after one terrorist group dropped its opposition to the peace talks.

The Northern Ireland Secretary spent 50 minutes in private conversation with five convicted loyalist terrorists, alone apart from her private secretary, before meeting IRA prisoners.

Within two hours 130 prisoners belonging to the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Freedom Fighters voted to drop their objection to the talks starting Monday.

Dr Mowlam said that her discussions with the terrorists had been "useful and constructive". She presented them with a 14-point plan on the future of the talks, telling them that there was "no question of Northern Ireland ceasing to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of the majority of the people who live there".

Courageous decision, page 8

**1998**

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# Muslims win right to their own state-funded schools



Children playing at Al Furqan school in Birmingham yesterday, one of the two Muslim primary schools to be given grant-maintained status

Blair's support resolves sensitive political issue after much agonising, reports John O'Leary

BRITISH Muslims won a decade-long battle to be allowed their own state schools yesterday when David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, approved grant-maintained status for two primary schools.

One of the successful applicants was Islamia Primary School, in Brent, northwest London, where Yusuf Islam, formerly Cat Stevens, the pop singer, has waged a long battle for public funding. The other was Al Furqan Primary School in Birmingham.

The two schools, which presently charge fees of up to £2,200, will become grant-maintained in April, but will have to change their status again when the School Standards Bill becomes law. They will then join other religious foundations as aided schools.

Two Jewish schools were also given grant-maintained status: Mathilda Marks Kennedy Primary School in Bar-

net, North London, and a new Jewish Progressive primary school proposed for Hertsmere, Hertfordshire.

Mr Blunkett also approved plans for a new Jewish Orthodox primary school in Hertsmere.

The creation of Muslim state schools has been a highly sensitive political issue for ministers and an emotive one for the Muslim community, which saw it as a test of the Government's promise of equal treatment with other faiths. Although the Church of England welcomed the decision, traditionalists argue that the supremacy of Christianity in schools should not be compromised, while some Labour critics consider all religious schools divisive.

Mr Blunkett and Gillian Shephard, his predecessor, agonised over the decision for more than a year, prompting a threat from Islamia's parents to sue the Government over the delay. But, with Tony Blair



Islam: always felt that justice would be done

a known supporter of Muslims' right to their own schools, approval was granted without debate in Cabinet.

Yesterday, however, Zahar Ashraf, the parents' spokesman, said there was "jubilation" over the announcement. "I have been getting calls from rabbis congratulating the school on an historic achieve-

ment. Now that they know they will receive fair and equal treatment, other Muslim schools should follow."

Yusuf Islam, who was in Bosnia collecting a peace award when the decision was announced, said: "We had always felt that some day justice would be done, but it was a marvellous surprise when it came. I had just touched down when the school rang, and I was lifted up again. It is only two Muslim schools in an ocean of thousands of Christian schools, so it isn't going to change the world, but it will give a great deal of hope to others."

The Rev David Streater, secretary of the Church Society, said the decision could have serious consequences. "Islam is not a quietest faith — it is probably more 'evangelistic' than Christianity itself — and this will be seen as just a foot in the door. We may be an increasingly secular society,

but this is still a generally Christian country and we have to defend that."

The additions to the state system will join 24 Jewish and 7,000 Christian schools. There are 60 independent Muslim schools, but Ibrahim Hewitt, secretary of their national association, said that only a handful would be in a position to apply for state funding.

Islamia first applied to become a state school in 1985, but has been rejected twice because of surplus places in other Brent schools. With a waiting list of almost 1,000 for 180 places, Islamia was able to satisfy ministers that it met the criterion of need for extra places in the state system, as well as demonstrating acceptable standards and offering equal opportunities to pupils of both sexes.

The smaller Al Furqan school has a waiting list of 500, and will receive extra funds to move to larger premises.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Creative director quits the Dome

A clash of creative talents led to the departure of one of the Millennium Dome's top directors last night. Stephen Bayley, consultant creative director, had been a controversial figure whose views on not displaying Union Jacks or the Christian religion within the dome had conflicted with other senior figures. Twice he had threatened to resign but withdrew his notice at the last minute. The New Millennium Experience Company said he would not be completing the remaining six months of his £80,000 a year three-day week contract by mutual agreement.

### Major's future

John Major says he plans to devote more time to charity work in an interview with Sir Robin Day for BBC News 24 today. He says he does not want an international post and that he has turned down "a number of business opportunities" since leaving Downing Street.

### Museum plan

Plans for an extension to Cambridge's best-known museum have been shelved because of objections from English Heritage. The Fitzwilliam Museum wanted a modern extension to its classical building, but the plans were opposed by academics at neighbouring Peterhouse.

### Unlicensed wit

More than 5,000 television licence evaders were caught in a two-week Christmas blitz. One man said his set was not in use but was warm because his wife put the turkey on it. Another said he was recording festive shows to watch after he bought a licence in the new year.

### Channel 4 head

Vanni Treves has been appointed chairman of Channel 4, succeeding Sir Michael Bishop, head of British Midland. Mr Treves, 57, is a senior partner in the City law firm Macfarlanes and also chairs BBA Group, McKee and the Dennis group.

### Police funding

Home Secretary Jack Straw has announced £125 million funding for two police bodies set up to fight organised-crime gangs operating nationally and internationally. The cash goes to the new National Crime Squad and the National Criminal Intelligence Service.

### Lawyers protest



The Solicitors Family Law Association criticised a storyline in BBC's *EastEnders* in which Cindy Beale — played by Michelle Collins, above — is fighting for child custody. Lawyers are said to have been portrayed as encouraging the couple to take sides, rather than seeking conciliation.

### Today's Vision

The Madonna film *Body of Evidence* is showing on BBC1 on Friday, January 16, at 11.15pm, and not at the time printed on the cover of today's *Vision*.

## BT raises price of asking a question

BY ADAM FRESCO

BRITISH TELECOM, which made a profit of more than £3 billion last year, is raising the cost of calling directory inquiries by 40 per cent.

From February 18 the price of ringing 192 will rise by 10p to 35p and for international inquiries the cost will rise from 60p to 80p. Both services will continue to be free from payphones and for visually impaired customers and callers will still be able to ask for up to two numbers.

BT says that the increase is to help to fund an investment of £84 million to improve the service. Last year it made a loss of £21 million on the 192 service; based on the same figures, the increase would bring an extra £24 million profit.

Steve Thorpe, a spokesman for the Telecommunications Users' Association, said: "It is an unjust price hike. We want to see a free service. You pay to ring directories and once you find someone's number, you pay again to ring it."

A spokesman for BT said: "This is the first increase to the price since charges were introduced in 1991. They were then 45p and came down to 25p in 1994." BT argues that many people use directory inquiries and then use other companies to make expensive calls. It hopes to announce plans for a free information service on the Internet in the spring.

## Duke rallies to defence of pomp and pageantry

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Government should tread carefully over plans to reform the pomp and pageantry of the State Opening of Parliament, according to the man responsible for the ceremony.

The Duke of Norfolk, who as Earl Marshal is the member of the Royal Household who organises the annual event, yesterday urged the Government to be cautious in making any changes.

Ministers denied reports yesterday that they were considering any reforms in the immediate future but admitted that some "preliminary soundings" had been taken.

The 450-year-old State Opening ceremony takes place every year at the beginning of each session of Parliament. Peers, bishops, MPs and diplomats wearing all their formal robes of state pack into the House of Lords.

Potential targets for reform include the arcane practice of Great Officers of State walking backwards before the Queen and the symbolic sweeping of the Lords' cellars by the Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeoman of the Guard, which dates back to the Gunpowder Plot.

The duke, whose family has administered the ceremony since 1677, said he had not been consulted by any member of the Government. "I am all for it continuing as it is," he said. "It is rather nice, with the guards of honour, the Yeomen of the Guard, and the heralds." Asked if the Government should be cautious about making any changes, he replied: "Yes, they should."

Government officials said that Labour's manifesto had made clear that ministers wanted to modernise the workings of Parliament but insisted that reform of the State Opening was not a priority.

Any reforms will initially be considered by Ann Taylor, Leader of the House of Commons, who chairs the all-party Commons Modernisation Committee. In a newspaper interview yesterday, she said that some parts of the ceremony were "peculiar".

But Lord Richard, the Leader of the Lords, denied her suggestion that he and Lord Carter, the Chief Whip in the Lords, were currently discussing the issue. "The idea that I am in active discussion at the moment looking at all the details of the ceremony for the State Opening with a view to revising it is simply not true."

Viscount Cranborne, the Tory leader in the Lords, said it was important that the State Opening of Parliament remained a magnificent occasion. "Dumbing down the ceremony would reduce the symbolic importance of the moment."

## Couple can sue over vasectomy baby

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A COUPLE who had an unplanned pregnancy despite the husband's vasectomy won the right to sue their health board for damages in a landmark ruling at the Court of Session in Edinburgh yesterday.

Three appeal judges overturned a previous decision made by another judge and thereby established a clear benchmark in Scottish law that the birth of a healthy baby can still be a reason to sue.

The ruling means that George and Laura McFarlane, of Arbroath, whose fifth child, Catherine, was born in 1992,

three years after her father had a sterilisation operation, can now proceed with their £110,000 damages claim against Tayside Health Board.

The decision by Scotland's highest court was announced in a written judgment by the Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Cullen, sitting with Lord McCluskey and Lord Allanbridge. It contradicted the ruling by Lord Gill last year, who declared that parenthood was always a "blessing" which outweighed the financial disadvantages.

In overturning the earlier judgment, Lord Cullen said: "It appears to me to be unwarranted to assume that a child is a blessing in every case." He suggested that there was no reason why parents should not be entitled to make a claim over the expenditure incurred "by the negligence of others".

Mr McFarlane, 47, a fish curer, had a vasectomy in 1989 after he and his 43-year-old wife decided not to have any more children. He was told the following year that he could stop using contraception, but Mrs McFarlane fell pregnant with Catherine, now aged five.

Method that failed, page 13

**NEXT WEEK IN THE TIMES**

**MONDAY**  
Can Blackburn keep up their title chase? Full report in the 16-page Times Sport

**TUESDAY**  
Diana Remembered  
The global commemoration of the Princess

**WEDNESDAY**  
Keyboard player Surfing the Net with David Bowie in *Interface*, your connection to the world of IT

**THURSDAY**  
Burt bounces back  
The return of Burt Reynolds in *Boogie Nights*

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Time To look e make wa

The art of keeping special skill alive

Happy 100th with a mystery

Homeless find d

حكاياتنا الأصل

# Mme Tussaud looks east to make wax work

ART school training in Britain is so dire that Madame Tussaud's has been forced to go as far afield as Azerbaijan in a desperate search for artists who can sculpt.

Judy Craig, head of the Tussauds Group portrait studio, said lifelike waxworks could not be created by artists who had barely been trained in drawing and sculpting from life. She said students were graduating without even the most basic understanding of anatomy, let alone some idea of how to model in clay.

The tradition is dying in Britain. Life drawing is just frowned upon. It is discouraged. The situation is desperate," she said.

David Hockney said: "The problem in art education is that you can't teach the craft but you can't really teach the poetry. You must teach what is practical, which is the craft. In music you're taught the craft. In poetry, you would be taught language. The poetries have to come from within. Painting might be dying because it is

**Conceptual and minimalist art have led to decline in skills, says Darya Alberge**

not taught. If something is not taught, it will die. You can't leave the world to be depicted simply by the camera."

Ms Craig believes that Britain's crumbling academic tradition has been highlighted by Tussauds' attempt to recruit a large number of "professional jobbing sculptors". The group had to create 175 waxworks for new exhibitions, including one in New York.

"We needed 12 sculptors very quickly. In the past we'd advertise in various papers for portrait sculptors. I'd get 40 or 50 portfolios and we'd select about a dozen and invite them to do a test head over a three-

day period." This time, although Tussauds received as many applications, the quality was so depressing it was forced to go abroad.

From a studio in New York Ms Craig whittled 200 applicants down to 22. After two weeks of tests she hired three Azerbaijanis. One had lived in New York since 1994, the other two went to New York specially for the interviews.

Some of the nine British artists recruited last June are having to be trained in-house. Ms Craig said: "We never had to give basic training before."

Ms Craig studied at the City & Guilds 20 years ago. "I was interested in figurative art and learning the techniques — how to construct an armature, how to do portraits in a structured way, how to use tools. We had a model every single day of the week. We were working from life all the time. All of that has changed, everywhere."

Noting how conceptual and minimalist works had obliterated the need to learn the rules before breaking them, she said: "Today artists just talk and write words. I'm of the school that you have to have done something with your hands. Some of the works stimulate conversation but needs a title other than art."

The decline, she said, was exacerbated by abstract artists who abandoned the need to draw in the 1960s and were unable to pass on any skills to the next generation.

Standards, she believes, are falling at the City and Guilds, one of the last bastions of traditionalism. Michael Kenny, the principal, said standards had increased considerably, pointing out that more than half the syllabus was dedicated to lifework.

"Judy Craig would like to see a school that does nothing but that," he said. "What we see is life study as the basis but not the absolute total."

Tussauds is not alone. When the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside advised the Historic Royal Palaces on Hampton Court, they found only a handful of carvers capable of carrying out the work.

## The art of keeping a special skill alive

By Arts Correspondent

AZERBAIJAN has given the world some outstanding poets, philosophers and scientists, but it may seem an unlikely place for Madame Tussaud's to have found sculptors. However, unlike other former republics of the Soviet Union, it invested heavily in academic training. In the tradition of Old Masters through the centuries — and Britain until the 1960s — artists begin specialist studies very early.

The Azerbaijan artists recruited by Madame Tussaud's talk of the inspiration from their country's historic miniatures and carpets, as well as modern artists such as Javad Mirjavadov and Cattar Bahfuzade.

But art knows no boundaries, and the influence of Old Masters from Rembrandt to

Rodin has been of paramount importance. Chingiz Babayev, 33, and his colleagues studied for 14 years, beginning at a specialist school at 11 and 12. They moved on to art college for four years and university for a further six years. Six days a week, they worked eight or nine hours. None came from an artistic family. Babayev's father was a mathematics teacher.

Until they joined Madame Tussaud's, they were earning a living from commissioned portraits, and producing avant-garde work. Khan Gasinov, 33, said: "We are able to work in both kinds of styles." He left Azerbaijan in 1994 for America. Hearing of the interviews, he contacted his friends at home and urged them to come to New York.

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"Judy Craig would like to see a school that does nothing but that," he said. "What we see is life study as the basis but not the absolute total."

Tussauds is not alone. When the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside advised the Historic Royal Palaces on Hampton Court, they found only a handful of carvers capable of carrying out the work.



Chingiz Babayev studies a model of Leonard Bernstein by Stuart Williamson

# Concerts chief resigned over 'patronising' programmes

By Peter Foster

THE Kenwood open-air concerts have lost their musical director amid accusations that English Heritage are dumbing down the content of the long-running and popular summer recitals.

Michael Webber, who has selected the Kenwood programmes for more than ten years, walked out after rejecting plans to popularise the event, including a concert of songs from Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals.

"I cannot go along with a philosophy which ignores long or difficult works because people aren't credited with an attention span longer than five or six minutes," he said yesterday. "I find this offensive and patronising. As a former teacher, I have always believed you should never underestimate your audience."

After the resignation, shortly before Christmas, Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, said: "I respect Michael's decision that he was unwilling to contribute to the more popular programmes we wish to introduce in 1998."

The annual concerts set in the neo-classical grandeur of Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath, North London, have been popular since 1951. However, in recent years programmes have broadened to include other musical styles such as jazz, English brass and opera. For many music lovers spreading a blanket on the lawns of Kenwood, drinking Champagne and settling down to an evening of light music and fireworks has become an integral part of summer.

English Heritage, who own Kenwood House and organise open-air concerts at several other properties throughout the summer, said yesterday the new programmes were reflecting the changing tastes of the Brit-



Webber: he objected to 'dumbing down'

ish public. "Popular classical pieces are certainly included at Kenwood but I do not think this can be interpreted as dumbing down," a spokeswoman added. The 1998 programme, which is yet to be confirmed, is expected to include classical works, as well as the concerts of songs composed by Lord Lloyd-Webber, who celebrates his 50th birthday this year.

Other possible bookings include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, who will play Dvorak's New World Symphony and Beethoven's piano concerto No 5. The jazz partnership of Dame Cleo Laine and John Dankworth are also expected.

Mr Webber, 71, said: "I accept the repertoire cannot stand still, but a balance must be struck between education and entertainment."

The Kenwood season has other detractors. Warren Mitchell, the comedian better known as Alf Garnett, who lives near Kenwood, led complaints from local residents last summer about the noise caused by the fireworks and stage amplifiers. "If the people would shut up and listen, the concerts wouldn't need amplifying," he said.

# Happy 100th for man with a mysterious past

By Russell Jenkins

BILLY DUNNE celebrated his 100th birthday yesterday. The sprightly old man spent so long in a mental hospital in Chester that the reason he was sent there has been lost in the mists of time.

He is not able to tell anyone why he was sent to Deva Hospital, now renamed the West Cheshire Hospital, 75 years ago. The doctors who treated him at the time have long since died; records have been destroyed or mislaid and no family claims him.

The only clues to his previous life are the pictures of a foreign battlefield he draws; the figures could come from a Great War battlefield. All that is known for certain is his date of birth, and he remains in good health and apparently cheerful. He does not wear glasses or a hearing aid, and likes to smoke 15 cigarettes a day.

The Queen's message of congratulations arrived for him at Crawford's Walk Nursing Home, where he has lived for two years. Staff from the nursing home and the West Cheshire Hospital threw a birthday party for him, with a cake. The guest of honour was the MP for the City of Chester, Christine Russell.

A senior nursing home staff member said: "He enjoyed himself immensely. He has been smiling all day. He has

had a good, fulfilled life. When he lived at the Deva, he was interested in gardening and able to indulge his passion.

"He was placed in an institution because, at that time, that was what they did with people like Billy. They didn't know what else to do with him. Times have changed."

Kevin Parry, in charge of the gardens at West Cheshire Hospital, remembers Mr Dunne with affection. "I have known Billy for 26 years and my father knew him before that," Mr Parry said. "Basically, he was incarcerated here and just left to it."

"We used to love having him around and it was always a



Dunne put in hospital for unknown reason in 1923

cheerful sight to see him running around every day. He was always running. He never seemed to walk anywhere.

"He has had a very happy life because he has never known anything else, but what happened to him would never be allowed in this day and age."

Nurses at the nursing home speak of his continuing wish to draw. His pictures have led to speculation that Mr Dunne, who was 16 when the First World War broke out, may have been in the trenches.

"In 26 years I don't think Billy spoke more than a hundred words to me but I think the world of him," said Mr Parry. "His drawings are quite simplistic but are very beautiful."

"Occasionally he draws men in military-type uniforms. They are Belgian or French characters. Perhaps this is a clue to what happened in his past."

The Wirral and West Cheshire Community NHS Trust said: "We are delighted that Billy Dunne has reached 100 years of age and would like to offer him our warmest congratulations."

"He was popular with everyone who came into contact with him and trust staff are pleased to hear that he appears to be as contented and settled in the community as he was in hospital."

# Suicides witness sues for stress

By Lin Jenkins

A MAN living next to a multi-story car park has witnessed two suicides, discovered the grim outcome of three more and seen another ten attempts foiled by police. John Boyce is now seeking compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder from his local council.

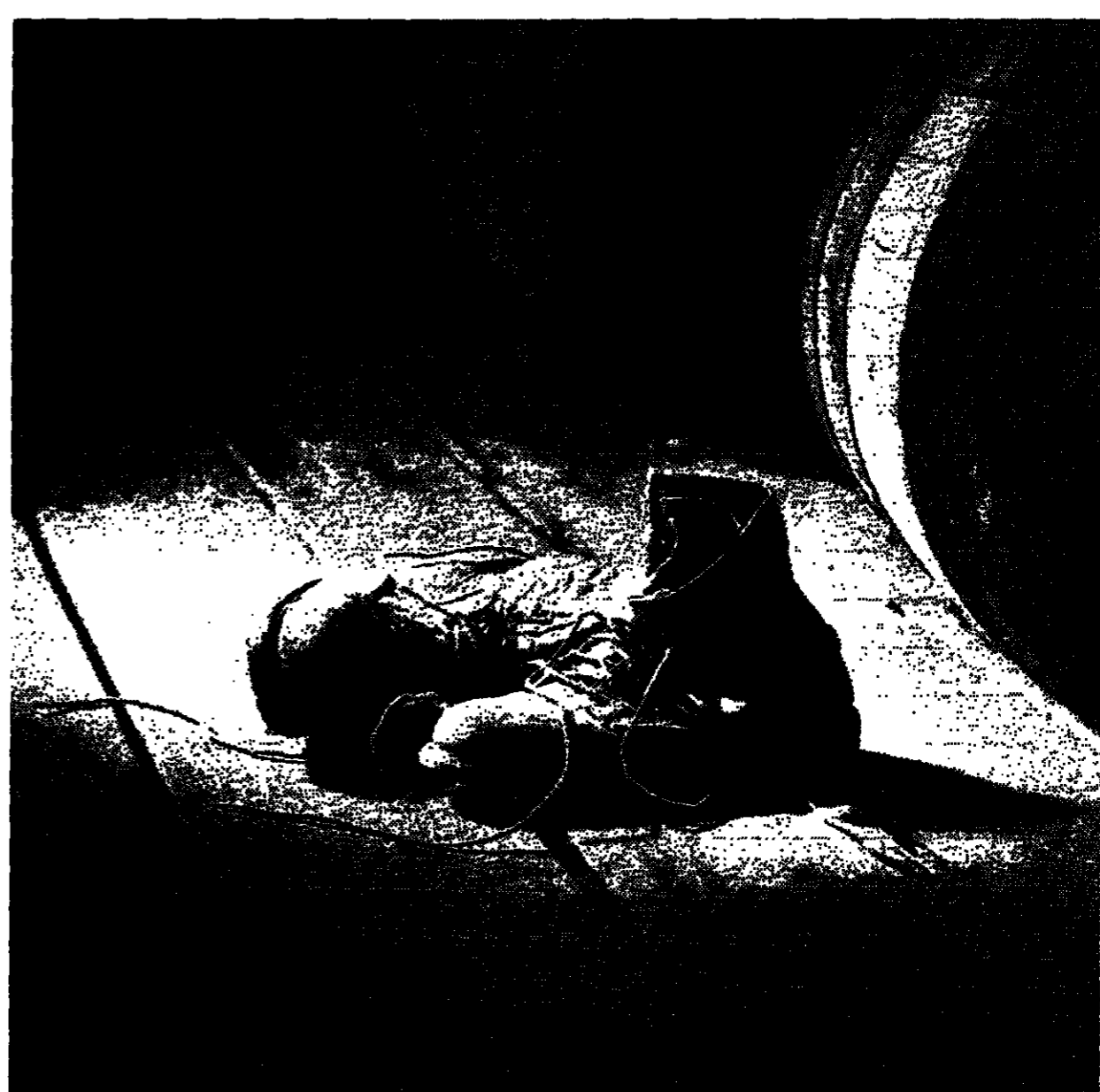
Mr Boyce has been renting a two-bedroomed maisonette in Torquay, Devon, for a year. He says Torbay council should have fenced in the car park's upper floors.

Some of the victims are from a local psychiatric unit, and the venue is so well known that the Samaritans have placed a telephone hot line on the top storey of the car park.

"It is unfortunate that I have been going in or out at these times, but it is awful to witness," Mr Boyce, a 40-year-old engineer, said.

He said the first suicide he witnessed was a 21-year-old psychiatric patient who missed him by feet when he jumped from the car park. "He landed about ten feet away. I had seen him all the way from the fourth floor when something caught my eye. It was not a nice sight."

Torbay council declined to comment yesterday but said it had passed the claim for compensation to its insurers.



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

# Homeless find don's wit wanting

By Adrian Lee

A CAMBRIDGE University academic caused an outcry yesterday after listing one of his recreations in *Who's Who* as the avoidance of beggars on the streets of the city. In the 1998 edition, George Salmond, 45, a professor of molecular microbiology, states that his interests are driving sports cars, good wine, malt whisky and comedy.

Ben the poor, the homeless and those who support them, saw nothing amusing in his final, more unusual pastime, of "the daily avoidance of assorted professional beggars, alcoholics and deranged individuals in the streets of Cambridge". Professor Salmond, a graduate of the University of Strathclyde where he

obtained a first class degree, was not prepared to divulge yesterday if his remark was meant to be tongue-in-cheek, or whether he had been scoured by one particularly unpleasant encounter with one of Cambridge's street people.

Although the city does have more than 1,000 homeless people, aggressive begging is not considered a problem.

The professor's entry surprised his colleagues and the university distanced itself from it. "It is a personal remark, not made in his capacity as a university professor," said a spokeswoman. A female colleague in the department of biochemistry, where the professor took up his post in 1996, said: "Let's hope he has not been correctly quoted."

The university supports Winter Com-

fort, a charity for the homeless in Cambridge. Its director, Ruth Wymer, said she would invite Professor Salmond to its drop-in centre to meet some of the homeless forced to beg on the streets. She said: "Maybe we can educate him a bit. I think he is greatly exaggerating the problem. This sort of statement from someone who has some standing is very unfortunate. I can't believe *Who's Who* can print things like that. It is really ghastly and does not sound like the comment of an intelligent person."

Barry, 37, a former prison inmate who began begging in Cambridge before Christmas, said: "Just because he has got money he thinks he can say these things. If he fell on hard times, like me, he would not talk that way."



# Child sex killer agrees to go to mental hospital

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

ROBERT OLIVER, the freed child sex killer who has spent weeks hiding in a police cell to protect himself from public revenge, has agreed to become a patient in a secure mental hospital.

The Deputy Chief Constable of Sussex, Mark Jordan, is hoping to complete an agreement with an institution prepared to accept Oliver, a paedophile who took part in the homosexual orgy which killed 14-year-old Jason Swift.

Other high-profile sex offenders may be offered the chance to become voluntary patients in hospitals which are used to treating dangerous offenders. The Home Office is so worried that it has organised a top-level meeting on Monday of probation officers, police and civil servants to consider how to deal with the release from prison of notorious paedophiles.

Mr Jordan wants judges to be given powers to detain sex offenders indefinitely until they are pronounced to be no further danger to society.

He is also calling for paedophile tendencies to be considered sufficient grounds for commitment under the Mental Health Act. At present, a sexual attraction towards children is not considered to be a psychiatric illness. Oliver was one of four men

jailed in 1989 after Jason Swift was throttled in a flat in Mackney, East London, after being gang-raped and tortured. His body was found buried in a wood in Essex.

Oliver was released last September after serving most of his 15-year sentence. He fled from threats in Dublin, Swindon, London, Liverpool and Manchester before arriving in Brighton on October 11, where police observed him watching small boys in a public library and on the beach.

When social services sent 25,000 warning letters to parents, Oliver asked police for protection. He has been kept in a cell in a Sussex police station ever since, at a cost of more than £35,000 to the



Oliver took part in orgy that killed Jason Swift

police budget for round-the-clock surveillance. MPs agree that it is a price worth paying to protect children while the authorities try to solve the dilemma.

Oliver has been assessed by two leading psychiatrists who agree that he is still a threat to children, but he cannot be committed to a psychiatric hospital under the Mental Health Act because he is not ill.

Mr Jordan said: "The only way we can do it is if he voluntarily submits himself to treatment and, at the moment, he has indicated that he is prepared to do that."

It is extremely rare for special psychiatric hospitals to take voluntary patients. They would not be able to force Oliver to stay, but, if he tried to leave, police could be alerted and they would have the option of telling the public his whereabouts.

No institution has yet agreed to accept Oliver, but several are holding talks and an agreement is hoped for soon. One of the issues is who should foot the bill.

The law was changed in 1991, shortly after Oliver's sentencing, so that sex offenders can now be forced to accept supervision on release from prison, and be sent back if they reoffend.



Wendy Smith, who needs sponsors to fund her crossing of North America by dog-sled, undertaken to raise funds for cancer research

# Charity expedition hits slippery patch

A WOMAN who is attempting to be the first to cross North America by dog-sled has run out of funds while crossing the Canadian prairie. Wendy Smith, 36, from Hope under Dinmore, near Hereford, hoped to raise £200,000 for cancer research (see Murray writes). But after accidents used up most of the money, she will have to quit unless sponsors can be found in the next ten days.

The 6,000 mile-journey from

Maine to Alaska, which began in November, was to have been her way of thanking the doctors who treated her cancer ten years ago. She wanted to show other patients that there is life after cancer. A former Army captain, she had Hodgkin's lymphoma diagnosed in 1988. A year of chemotherapy at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in southeast London worked and she decided to lead an active life as possible. She is now a trained

mountaineer and has led treks through the Himalayas and in Africa and America. Two years ago she had a growth removed from her hip. Speaking yesterday from Ontario, Miss Smith, who has covered 1,500 miles with a four-man support team, said that the lack of snow had often forced the expedition to use roads and railway lines. Last month, a support vehicle carrying the dogs crashed. A reconnaissance vehicle smashed into

a tree; there is no money to repair it. Miss Smith does the "mushing", standing behind the sled and driving it on. "There are great moments," she said. "Yet I am very tired. But I have got to try to go on because this is so important for cancer sufferers." **Donations to the expedition can be sent to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, 2/3 Chancery House, Tolworth Close, Tolworth, Surrey KT6 7EW.**

# Officer in clear to marry rape victim

By LIN JENKINS

THE detective who plans to marry the Austrian woman gang-raped on a shopping weekend in London has not broken any rules and will not face any disciplinary action, police sources confirmed yesterday.

Alexandra Sablainig, 33, met Detective Constable Ted Grimwood, 56, in the hours after her ordeal at the hands of a teenage gang who left her dead in a canal.

Constable Grimwood was involved in the extensive inquiry which led to the jailing of seven youths aged 14 to 18 last year for between ten and 12 years, but was not the officer assigned to counsel her. They are always women.

Ms Sablainig returned home to Vienna after the attack, coming back only once before the trial to see detectives and make a statement.

The relationship is understood to have remained profes-

sional until after the end of the trial last April during which Ms Sablainig was forced to relive the 45-minute attack.

She had already left her husband, Mario, and taken her two young children to live with their mother. Her husband's unsympathetic attitude to the attack, in September 1996, and suggestion that she had brought it upon herself, was, she said, the final straw in the failing marriage.

"I know some people will think what has happened between Ted and me is somewhat unusual and others might think I am using him as some sort of support system. I am not. I love him and believe we would have fallen in love had I been a shop worker and he a taxi driver."

"It is hard to describe how or why something so good has come out of something so terrible but it has and for that I am glad," she said.

# Ex-potholer gets trapped under floor

By RICHARD DUCE

A FORMER potholer was recovering in hospital last night after firemen rescued him from under the floorboards of his home.

George Diggs, an 88-year-old DIY enthusiast, became trapped in a warren of piping and electric cables trying to fix a blocked water pipe. However, the stress of being trapped 20ft from his point of entry, a garden access hatch, caused a mild stroke. He was taken to Bristol Royal Infirmary, where his condition is said to be stable.

His wife, Delphine, 70, said: "As he disappeared down there, he said 'I'll fix that pipe even if it kills me.' Now it seems it almost did. He's a Geordie and very stubborn. He was determined to do it himself. I'm afraid his DIY days may be numbered."

Bristol Water yesterday offered to send an engineer to investigate the blockage.

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Maurizio Gucci, heir to the fashion firm, died in a pool of blood outside his office



Patrizia Martinelli, "the Black Widow", and two of her alleged hired accomplices, Orazio Cicala and Giuseppina Auremma, a clairvoyante



# Gucci's Black Widow

Italy is braced for a murder trial that will spotlight the fashion dynasty's feuding, Richard Owen writes

When the Spice Girls came to Italy to promote *Spiceworld* — the *Movie*, they spurned the Colosseum and the Vatican Museums and headed for the other high spot on every tourist's Italian itinerary: the Gucci boutique on the Via Condotti, Rome's equivalent of Bond Street.

This boutique, and a Milan counterpart, are under permanent siege from hundreds of Japanese ladies who fly to Italy to shop — and have to be kept at bay by doormen. But to many Italians "Gucci" is synonymous not only with shoes, handbags and other designer accessories, but murder. On March 27, 1995, Maurizio

Gucci, the bespectacled 46-year-old heir to the fashion dynasty, was shot near his office on a busy Milan street, dying in a pool of blood on the steps. A year ago his former wife, Patrizia Reggiani Martinelli, a vivacious woman of 50 dubbed "the Black Widow" by the Italian press, was charged with ordering the killing. This week preliminary hearings opened in Milan, and in April she goes on trial with four alleged accomplices in a plot that is said to involve international intrigue, sexual

jealousy and the paying of cash to kill. Gucci itself has thrived under new management and sales are booming. It no longer belongs to the family, but to Investcorp, a Bahrain-based investment group that is controlled by a holding company in The Netherlands.

Its president and chief executive, Domenico De Sole, 53, the Italian-born former managing director of Gucci America, has turned what under Maurizio was becoming a loss-making company sliding towards bankruptcy into a profitable enterprise with annual sales of more than \$500 million (£309 million). De Sole restructured, redesigned some lines while bringing back classics, and

name and money" — and she found both in Maurizio. He fell in love with her Elizabeth Taylor looks and style and, despite opposition from his father Rodolfo — who even appealed to the Archbishop of Milan to intervene — they married in 1972. They had two daughters, Alessandra and Allegra, before the business began to fall apart and Maurizio's eye to rove. The pair separated in 1984 and later divorced. Patrizia received £500,000 in alimony — a payment she dismissed as "nothing more than a plate of lentils".

Shortly before he was shot, Maurizio, who had by then lived with Signora Franchi for a year, halved the payments. What happened next, accord-

ing to the prosecution, is that the "Black Widow" — who had herself taken a lover, a 50-year-old steel industry executive called Renato Verona — plotted to have her husband eliminated, being as ruthless in disposing of him as she had been in acquiring him. At the funeral she was shown in tears; but soon afterwards she appeared animated on a television chat show.

A former family nanny told police Patrizia Martinelli had

there, she replied: "Yes, for the death of my husband."

Signora Goren Monti says Patrizia often sits in her cell in stiletto heels and a fur coat, painting her nails, while cellmates wait on her hand and foot. "She does not look like an accused woman at all," her former school friend said.

"She is still like a Milan high-society lady going off to a party."

"It is as if nothing had happened at all."



Paola Franchi at the murder scene. Gucci evidently planned that they should marry

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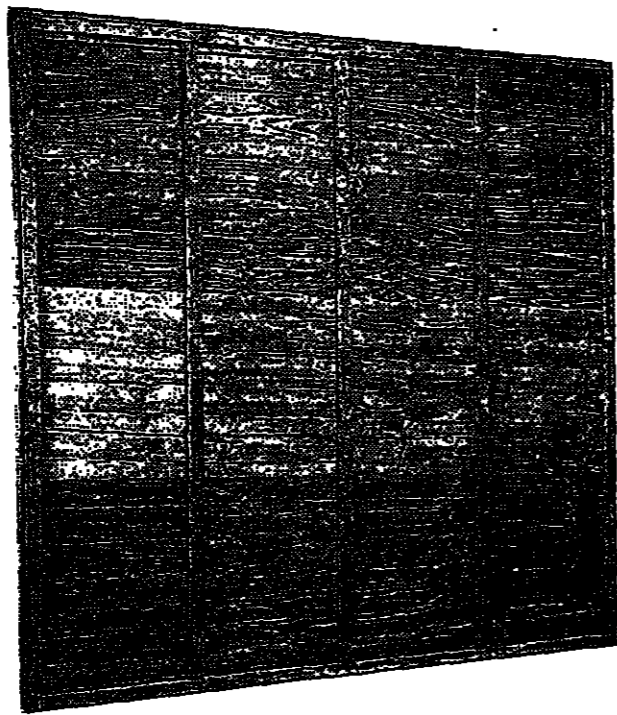
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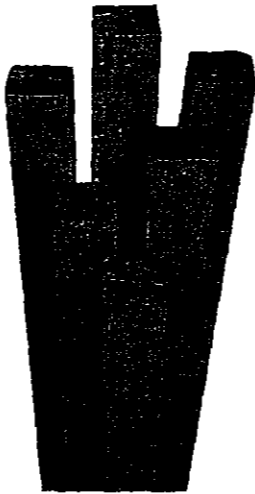
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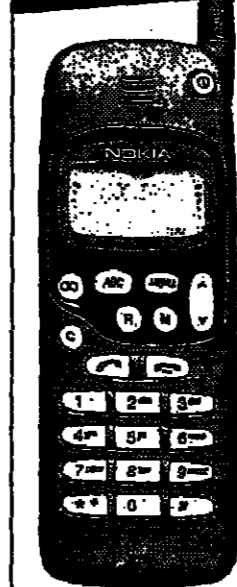
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# On me 'ead: how football cleaned up



Slick finishing: from left, 1950s Brylcreem boy Compton, permed Keegan, Wash 'n' Go McAteer and new Brylcreem boy Beckham

**DAVID GINOLA**, the French footballer famed for having the silkiest hair in the Premier League, has joined the shampoo set. From next week the Tottenham Hotspur midfielder will be seen on national television as the face of L'Oréal after signing a reported £60,000 contract to advertise male haircare products. Ginola, 30, the first man to front an advertising campaign for the cosmetic giant, was chosen to encourage men, as well as women, to follow a haircare programme. Hair has played a large part in football culture since the 1950s, when the Arsenal striker Denis Compton signed to promote Brylcreem. In the 1970s and 1980s, the frizzy perms of stars such as Kevin Keegan and Bryan Robson

**David Ginola is the latest soccer star to be selected for his locks. Carol Midgley goes back to the roots of a sporting obsession**

often caused more comment than their footballing skills. Ginola's signing means that he will join a L'Oréal advertising team that includes the actress Jennifer Aniston, one of the stars of the American sitcom *Friends*. His commercial will show him in action on the field, as well as in the shower. Caroline Cornwell, the marketing manager of L'Oréal Paris, said: "Our research shows that 1990s men are increasingly interested in the way he looks. As a respected sports

personality, David Ginola is the perfect person to reach this market. He is renowned not only for his dazzling football skills but also his impeccable presentation. "As a sportsman, not a movie star, his haircare routine has to suit his lifestyle. We hope that it will encourage other men to follow his lead and look after their hair." Ginola, recently voted the Most Stylish UK Sportsman by *Elle* magazine, also appeared last year in a commercial for Renault Laguna

with the slogan: "It's all worked out beautifully for Ginola." Other recent signings to the world of haircare include the Manchester United and England midfielder David Beckham, who is the new face of Brylcreem, and the Liverpool and Ireland player Jason McAteer, who advertises Wash 'n' Go shampoo. McAteer said yesterday: "Initially the commercial only went out in Ireland, but recently they started showing it here as well. I have taken a bit of ribbing from the other players." Marketing experts believe that more football stars will be snapped up before the World Cup to advertise ranges of products from soft drinks to health snacks.



David Ginola: famed for the silkiest hair in the Premiership

## Rail firms will avoid penalties for lateness

By Arthur Leathley

RAIL companies are expected to escape heavy punishment, even though most have admitted that delays increased significantly in the final months of last year. A complex formula that averages the figures over 12 months is expected to spare the worst-performing companies from substantial cash penalties. Evidence disclosed this week by *The Times* indicates that initial post-privatisation improvements had given way to lengthening delays. Official figures to be released this month are expected to show that most operators are performing less well than a year earlier, and that one third run one train in six late. The figures are the first since Gavin Strang, the Transport Minister, imposed tougher objectives on John O'Brien, the franchising director, in November to increase the number of passengers and "to secure a progressive improvement in the quality of passenger services".

Widow



### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Pair killed on road

A boy aged four and his grandmother died after being hit by a car as they tried to cross a busy road near the child's home. Last night police were trying to discover the circumstances of the crash, which occurred as an unlit accident blackspot. They believe that strong winds and rain may have contributed to the accident, which happened after dusk on Thursday on the A1079 at Barnby Moor, East Yorkshire. William Johnson died at the scene. Peggy Johnson, 67, died in hospital. The driver suffered severe shock.

#### SOS hoax charge

A man has appeared in court charged with making hoax telephone calls that led to a six-hour air and sea search in force nine gales on Thursday at a cost of more than £239,000. Sidney Grayston, 52, a former lifeboatman, was remanded on bail by magistrates in Preston.

#### Taking a ducking

Underwater speakers that play sounds of a boat are to be used to try to scare eider ducks from eating the stock from Scottish mussel farms. Bob Furness, of Glasgow University, who is studying the problem, said: "We have tried scarecrows, but the birds are very canny."

#### Police car getaway

Two teenagers who were walking home in the rain after burgling a house thumbed a lift home in a police car. Kyle Mason, 18, and a friend aged 14 later admitted the burglary and have been sent to a young offenders institution for six months by Cardiff Crown Court.

#### Stolen bird flies home

A champion racing pigeon worth £25,000, stolen three months ago, has given thieves the slip and flown home. His breeder, Keith Turner, 51, was in his garden when Red Daniel perched on the roof. "I called to him and he came straight down to me. It was a marvellous moment."

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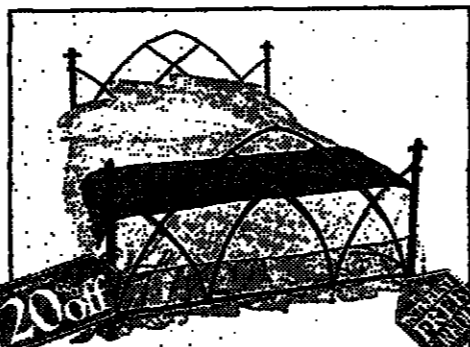
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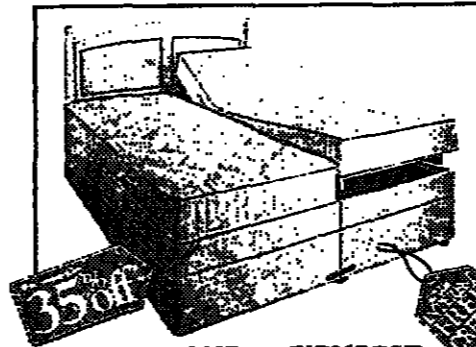
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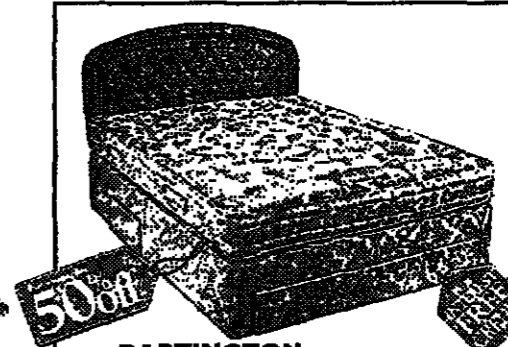
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Mo Mowlam at the Maze: she decided on the visit without Blair's explicit approval

# The courageous decision that was 'very Mo'

**Michael Gove on the events that brought a Cabinet minister into the Maze**

THE pressures that persuaded Mo Mowlam to go to the Maze were unleashed in the prison 13 days before. For loyalists, a steady accumulation of perceived concessions to the IRA had come to resemble, in the words of one, "the slow piling up of a bonfire for the Union". The match was lit when the loyalist warlord Billy Wright was shot by two INLA terrorists.

Wright was a hate figure for nationalists and a renegade in the ranks of loyalism. He had been violently opposed to the talks to which the two main loyalist groups had committed themselves, and had set up his own breakaway Loyalist Volunteer Force to continue a terror campaign. Mainstream loyalists might have been expected to shed few tears for him, but his death provided an unhappy focus for more widespread fears. Some loyalists went so far as to suspect collusion between the killers and the authorities.

The former Ulster Freedom Fighters killer Kenny McClinton, now an evangelical minister who spoke at Wright's graveside, said: "The things that were required to bring guns into a high-security situation to murder someone of such a high profile as Billy Wright — and the history of people having guns in another prison, then being moved to within 50 yards of their target — it beggars belief to think there is not some sort

of collusion." His conspiratorial view is not shared by all loyalists, but the feeling that the Government to which they pledge loyalty is not on their side spreads far beyond the hardliners.

Plans to relax security, the absence of any IRA decommissioning, the prominence of Gerry Adams, and interventions by the Irish Government, all contributed to a feeling that negotiations were "a Provo process, not a peace process".

Last Sunday, UDA prisoners in the Maze voted to abandon the peace process. This provoked a dramatic response from a Secretary of State who, although hugely popular in London and Dublin, has seen support ebb in Ulster. Her "touchy-feely" style has charmed many of Northern Ireland's people, but there are widespread doubts about her strategic grasp. Some civil servants are unhappy with her crisis management style, and one recently retired mandarin warned the

Secretary of State that she must learn to "trust her office".

Dr Mowlam decided on a courageously intimate approach with the men of the UDA. The initiative was described by one Unionist MP as "very Mo", typical of her exaggerated faith in her own approachability. The decision was taken in defiance of the accumulated wisdom of the security establishment, and without the explicit prior approval of the Prime Minister.

Dr Mowlam decided to meet the men of violence during a meeting with representatives of the Ulster Democratic Party, whose arguments in favour of talks had not influenced the men in the Maze. She broke off the Whitehall meeting to talk with her permanent secretary, and then rang No 10 to tell the Prime Minister of her plan. Mr Blair was in a EU presidency meeting, but Dr Mowlam was told, in her own words, that there was "no problem" with her plan.

When the Prime Minister heard personally, he was apparently concerned about the risks but, as in the past, he had no hesitation in giving his full public backing and the benefit of any doubts.

The initiative is unlikely to be the last when the cautious cross their fingers and hope. But yesterday Dr Mowlam proved the doubters wrong.

### LEADING PLAYERS

**Ulster Unionist Party**  
 Leader: David Trimble  
 MPs: 10  
 History: largest and most moderate of Unionist parties. Ran Ulster from 1921 until 1972 when British Government dissolved Stormont and introduced direct rule. Also known as Official Unionists.  
 Stance on talks: four out of ten MPs opposed to talks but Trimble committed and wants return to a parliament with cross-border co-operation limited to issues like tourism.

**Democratic Unionist Party**  
 Leader: Ian Paisley  
 MPs: 2  
 History: formed by Paisley in 1972. Evangelical hardliners but anti-paramilitary and demanding security measures against terrorists.  
 Stance on talks: boycotting talks as they want retention of direct rule. Follows the talks will lead to a united Ireland.

**UK Unionist Party**  
 Leader: Robert McCartney  
 MPs: 1  
 History: one-man band formed in 1995 to contest North Down by-election after personality clash with DUP leadership.  
 Stance on talks: boycotting talks in protest at the engagement with terrorists. Ally of DUP but more supportive of civil rights for Catholics.

**Progressive Unionist Party**  
 Leader: David Ervine  
 MPs: 0  
 History: formed in run-up to 1994 ceasefire as political wing of Ulster Volunteer Force. The UVF, reformed in the 1990s to oppose links to Dublin, is now more politically sophisticated. Damaged by emergence of terrorist splinter group LVF.  
 Stance on talks: considering whether to stay in process which it believes is catering to republicans. Rejects anything more than token cross-border arrangements and wants radical social reform.

**Ulster Democratic Party**  
 Leader: Gary McMichael  
 MPs: 0  
 History: Belfast-based emerged during progress to 1994 ceasefire as representatives of paramilitaries. Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Freedom Fighters. Hardline and very strong in Belfast.  
 Stance on talks: similar to PUP but footsoldiers, including Maze prisoners visited by Dr Mowlam, suspicious of process.

### THE DOCUMENT

This is the document presented to UFF prisoners by Mo Mowlam:

These are the points I wanted to make to you, which I have put in writing so there can be no misunderstanding.

- 1: As Secretary of State for Northern Ireland my duty is to act in the interests of all the people living in Northern Ireland. That means in the main working to establish peace and political stability and to maximise the social and economic opportunities for all the people of Northern Ireland.
- 2: Recent acts of sectarian violence have once again left the people of Northern Ireland very fearful for the future. We will continue to take whatever steps are necessary to combat the threat of terrorism wherever it comes from.
- 3: But the long-term defeat of terrorism requires more than a commitment to support the efforts of the security forces. It requires a proper political settlement that is agreed between political representatives and widely supported on both sides of the community.
- 4: Such a political settlement must address the issues and relationships which are of concern to both sides of the community. Unionists, for example, want to see changes to the Irish constitution and a replacement for the Anglo-Irish agreement. Nationalists want a new relationship between unionism and nationalism within the island of Ireland and North-South arrangements which would help to accommodate the Irish nationalist identity of the minority community in Northern Ireland.
- 5: The talks process is designed to allow these and all other issues of concern to be discussed and resolved. It gives all sides an opportunity to achieve the goals of great importance to them without abandoning the values and principles they hold dear.
- 6: No participant's fundamental interests are threatened. Any agreement must have the support of parties representing majorities on both sides of the community. Then any agreement will need to be endorsed by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum before the legislation necessary to implement it could be put to Parliament.
- 7: Both the British and Irish Governments have said that consent will be a guiding principle for them in the negotiations and that there is no pre-determined outcome. The parties in the talks have

declared their support for this. There is no question of Northern Ireland ceasing to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of a majority of the people who live there.

8: Participation in the negotiations is of course open to all parties with an electoral mandate which have demonstrated their commitment to exclusively democratic methods. Participation also requests total and absolute commitment to the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence.

9: Like you, I have been frustrated at the slow progress in the talks. But we have been discussing matters of substance... and there were encouraging signs before Christmas that the parties were prepared to move towards an agreement on the key issues.

10: The talks need to become focused on what the broad parameters of any agreement would be. Our efforts to get that agreed... will be stepped up when the talks come back next week and we want to see early progress made.

11: Meanwhile the Government is committed to building confidence throughout the community. It will govern with fairness but not favour to either side.

12: No doubt the clearest boost to confidence will come through agreements in the talks process. But on the way, other issues of confidence to both sides are being discussed... We recognise that prisoner issues are important to parties on both sides. They, too, need to be resolved alongside progress on all the other issues to the satisfaction of the participants.

13: We have a responsibility to maintain community confidence in the criminal justice system and the political process. We are prepared... to discuss parties' concerns and to work on an account of what would happen in respect of prisoner releases in the context of a peaceful and lasting settlement being agreed. But... there will be no significant changes to release arrangements in any other context or for prisoners associated with a paramilitary organisation engaged in terrorist activity.

14: The people of Northern Ireland want and deserve a lasting peace won through negotiation and agreement by their political representatives. The Prime Minister and I are committed to that goal and will do all we can to help achieve it. I call upon all others who can influence this process in any way to do the same.

## Kennedy flies in to plead for peace

By Audrey Magee IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

EDWARD KENNEDY, the US senator and often outspoken critic of British policy on Northern Ireland, made his first visit to the Province yesterday and pleaded with extremists not to destroy the peace process.

Mr Kennedy said that the hardline paramilitary groups trying to wreck the peace process were driven by anger and "blinded by a fear of the future. There must be no return to violence. Killing produces only more killing."

Visiting Northern Ireland little more than a week after the death of his nephew Michael in a skiing accident, Mr Kennedy said that the talks process remained an "irresistible force" for positive change. Despite the extrem-



Kennedy: "There must be no return to violence"

ists, a new spirit was gaining momentum. "It can banish the fear that blinds. It can conquer the anger that fuels the merchants of violence. We are building an irresistible force that can make the immovable object move."

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# The Galaxy of stars setting sail after EastEnders

TAKE 43 nationalities, pack them on board a pleasure palace floating around the Caribbean and leave the film cameras running for seven weeks. The result is *The Cruise*, a 12-episode TV saga of hot nights and frayed nerves aboard one of the world's most luxurious liners.

After the success of fly-on-the-wall documentaries ranging from *The House*, about the Royal Opera House, to *Hotel*, about life at the Adelphi in Liverpool, the BBC is so confident about its new series that it has been scheduled for 8pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, after *EastEnders*, for six weeks, starting next week.

It is being promoted as much as a real-life soap opera as documentary. Three characters form the main focus of the series which takes place aboard *Galaxy*, owned by the Greek company Celebrity Cruises: Jane McDonald, a Yorkshire singer who is headlining the ship's cabaret entertainment for the first time in her career; Amanda Reid, the social hostess who has come from Folkestone via a career as a dancer to be *Galaxy's* unrelenting smile; and Granville Bailey, an ebullient Jamaican barman who barrels around the ship offering daiquiris and pina colodas, taking 15 per cent in commission for each one he sells. There are

**Philip Delves Broughton on BBC hopes for new series as fly on the wall goes out to sea**

1,000 staff serving 2,000 passengers but it is these three we get to know best.

It may not be the best piece of scheduling, to start a series about life aboard a luxury cruise liner in the same week as the Hollywood movie *Titanic* is released, but the BBC is banking on the British love of cruising to conquer all. Cruise holidays are to the late 1990s what package holidays were to the Eighties. There are cruises tailored especially for homosexuals, for the elderly, for the young, single and hot-to-trot, and just plain cruising cruises.

Over the 1996 festive season, Chris Terrill, maker of *The Cruise*, spent seven weeks aboard *Galaxy*. The liner was a long way from the subject of another of Mr Terrill's documentaries, *HMS Brilliant*, 73,000 tonnes and 82ft long, *Galaxy* is one of the biggest and flashiest cruise ships in the

world. "The docu-soap has to evolve," Mr Terrill says, "and our one is slightly different in that it is much more personal, more people-led than event-led."

What *The Cruise* lacks in the sort of drama that characterised *Hotel* it makes up for with intimate portrayals of its human subjects. In the first episode Jane McDonald, 34, is seen in an awful state of stage-fright before going on for her first set in the lavish auditorium. After 13 years in the chorus she is suddenly out on her own.

Now back in her home town of Wakefield, where she is writing and recording original songs for an album, she is taking a break from seven nearly uninterrupted years on the ships and living with her mother.

She is happy she participated in the series. "We all wait for that big chance," she says. "With the series and my album, it's make or break time for me."

In the series she is seen with her boyfriend, Henrik Brixen, a Danish marine engineer. They are to marry in May on the Caribbean island of St Thomas. She no longer points him out from the stage when he is sitting in the audience, as



Crew members of the liner *Galaxy* with the ship's master. Right, cruising in the 1930s

she does in the series. "We have gone beyond that early stage," she says. Amanda Reid and Granville Bailey are still working the ships.

Though there are 43 nationalities among the staff of *Galaxy*, it was no trouble for Mr Terrill to find British

subjects for his documentary. "Brits are very big on cruise ships," he says, "particularly in administration and entertainment."

"They also tend to be, like many British abroad, larger than life and more British than the British."

## Tour firms are riding on crest of a wave

ABOUT 750,000 Britons went on cruises last year, paying an average £1,200 a person for two weeks. Prices for a week begin at about £500, though at the top end of the market it is possible to pay well over £5,000.

In the past decade the cost of cruising has dropped by 40 per cent. Records are set almost every year for the size of ships. In 1996 the *Carnival Destiny* held the record at 893ft. This year the *Grand Princess* will surpass it, at 951ft and a cost of £300 million.

Next year the Royal Caribbean group's Eagle class liner will be the biggest, at 1,019ft long and 206ft tall. As well as the standard discos, casinos, pools and clay pigeon shooting, it will have its own television station. Disney's first two cruise liners will be launched this year.

The average age of holiday-makers has dropped to 53. They are no longer the preserve of the retired and cruise companies are doing their best to appeal to families. The Mediterranean is still the most popular destination for the British, although the Caribbean and Alaska are becoming more affordable.

In the United States, the market is worth billions and has seen custom from Britain rise by 50 per cent since it began exploiting the British market three years ago.



Cruise dancers Michele Morrison and Jack Failla

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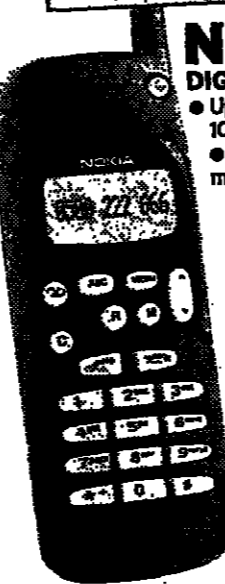
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# Scots MPs will sit in former brewery

Magnus Linklater on Donald Dewar's vision of the Scottish parliament

THE headquarters of a brewery firm next to the Queen's residence in Edinburgh is to be the site of the first parliament in Scotland for almost 300 years.

Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, said yesterday that the four-acre site in Holyrood at the foot of Edinburgh's Royal Mile offered a prestigious and historic setting. "I am convinced that when future generations look back to the decision that we have made today they will applaud the choice to create a new symbol for Scottish democracy in the heart of Scotland's capital," Mr Dewar said.

Scotland was a "pretty conservative" nation that had to shake off its complacency if it was to grasp the opportunities of a new parliament. Delivering what amounted to a national pep talk after his announcement of the site, he said that the time had come to inject a bit of reality into the debate about Scotland's future. Unless the nation

seized the chance to think radically and consider reforms in everything from education to law and order, it would risk simply following the English example in policy areas.

"There is a whole range of issues where we, perhaps a little complacently, assume that we are rather different," he said. "We have to try to

strengthened under a devolution system. There would be budgetary constraints, but there would also be immense challenges to be faced independently of Westminster. "There is no use simply waiting to see what the English, or Westminster, are going to do, then just follow them," he said. "If we've got a legal or educational system of our own then we're going to want to develop it."

Mr Dewar was speaking in his splendid Art Deco office in St Andrew's House, now designated as the site of the new Scottish Executive. It is here that Scotland's First Minister

— equivalent of a Prime Minister — will sit, once the new parliament is housed in its state-of-the-art building down the hill at Holyrood. The contrast could hardly be greater: the Scottish Secretary's office has walnut-paneled walls and bookcases bearing leatherbound volumes redolent of the past. *The Memoirs of Montrose, Tytler's History of Scotland*, and a biography of Mary, Queen of Scots.

The new parliament, he said, would unite history and modernity. Mr Dewar was careful to emphasise what he called "the stability factor" — the importance of good working relations with Westminster. But he added that within those areas where a parliament could effect change, it would be "uninhibited".

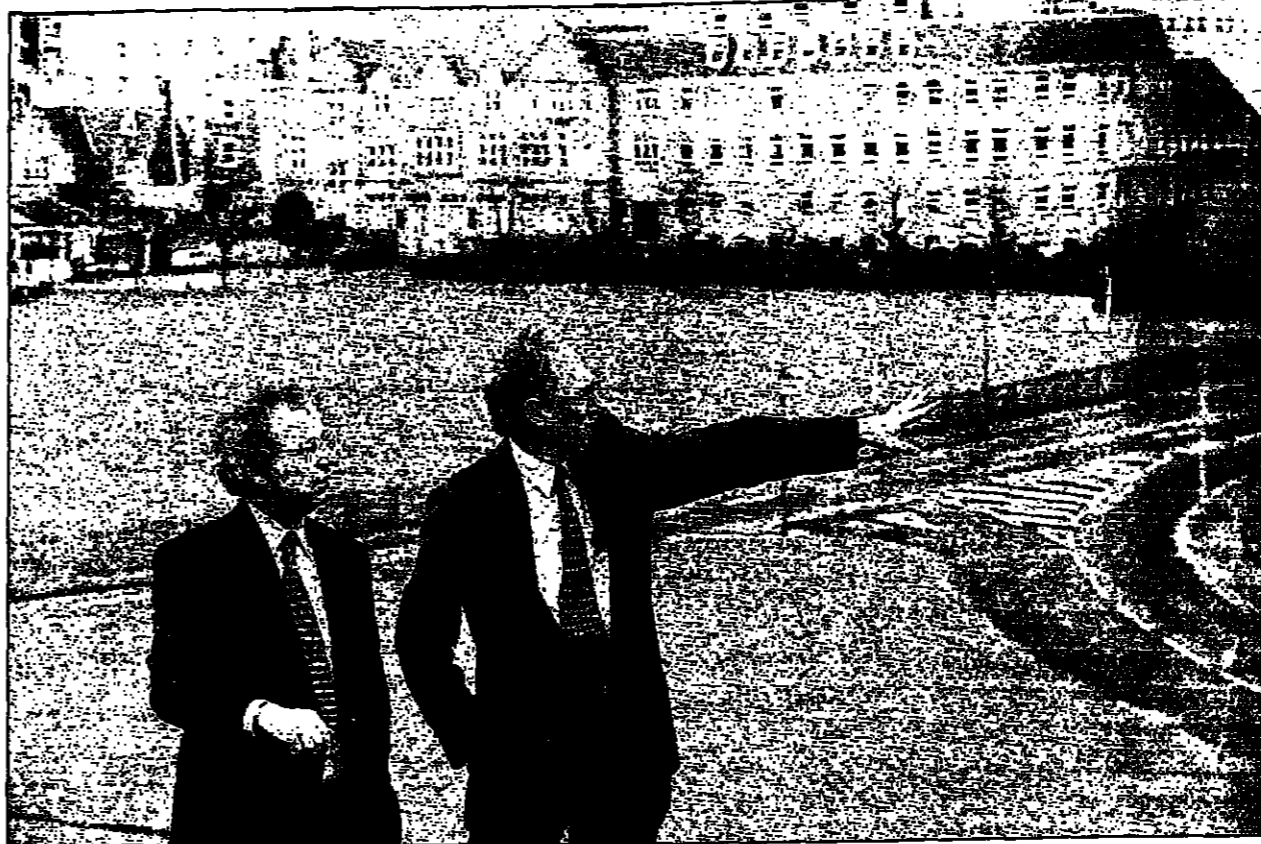
"There are opportunities for fairly radical policy changes," he said. "There will be a chance for all sorts of Scottish points of view to be put that will be listened to in a way they couldn't be at Westminster. This will be a more accessible place. People will feel more involved."

The First Minister would be more "untrammelled", he thought, than the current Scottish Secretary. "A great deal can be achieved. I think he will have prominence and an opportunity to define policy areas that is simply not open at the moment."

At the same time he said that a new level of co-operation could be expected to emerge between rival parties in Scotland. The proportional voting system would open a new style of politics that would be "unusual" and require a lot

of thinking about how the parties would adapt. He had no doubt they would rise to the challenge.

Mr Dewar confirmed the suggestion that Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, had also nursed ambitions to run as First Minister and had looked at it carefully. "He would have been a formidable force," Mr Dewar said. "But he decided, and I totally understand, that he is starting out on a very exciting period of the British presidency in Europe, and that it would be better to end the speculation and stay with that. It's been a very friendly matter."



Donald Dewar, right, and Henry McLeish, Scottish Office Minister, in front of the new parliament site



## Echoes of Robert the Bruce inspire new parliament

By Gillian Harris, Scotland Correspondent

THE new Scottish parliament in Holyrood, at the foot of Edinburgh's Royal Mile, will be next to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, a royal residence at least from the reign of Robert the Bruce, who held a parliament there in 1326. Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, said yesterday.

The sprawling site is currently occupied by the offices of Scottish and Newcastle brewery. The company, which has been an outspoken opponent of devolution, will vacate the headquarters where it has been based since 1985 in the spring.

Work on the parliament building is expected to begin soon afterwards, but it is unlikely to be completed before autumn 2001. The parliament, which is due to convene for the first time in January 2000, will have to find a temporary home for the first 18 months of the administration. It is thought that the purpose-built parliament building will cost in the region of £50 million.

As well as confirming the location, Mr Dewar also announced a competition to design the building. There is a strong feeling that it should focus on innovation.

Although yesterday's announcement had been widely predicted, supporters of the rival sites expressed disappointment. Calton Hill, near the old Scottish parliament building, had been favourite.

Alex Salmond, the leader of the Scottish National Party, who campaigned for the parliament to be based at Calton Hill, said: "It is extremely regrettable that Donald Dewar has broken the consensus which exists for Calton Hill. The decision has been arrived at without any consultation."

Jim Wallace, leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, said that his party had expressed a strong preference for Calton Hill, but added: "No matter where the parliament is sited, what matters most of all is what's in it, who's in it and how it operates."

Raymond Robertson, the chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party, warned the Government that the cost of the parliament should not be allowed to get out of control. "It is patently clear that the original £40 million figure in the White Paper is already a nonsense," he said. "The true estimated cost is escalating rapidly in a multimillion-pound segments to perilously near the £100 million mark."

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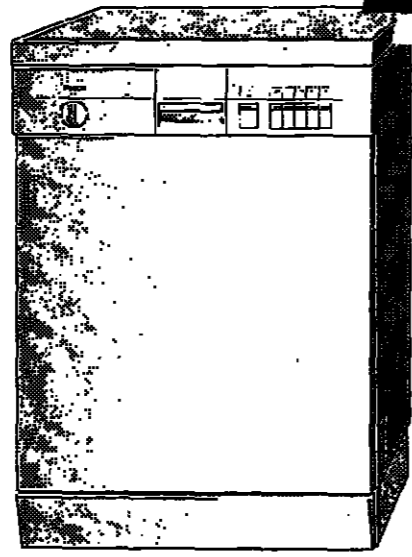
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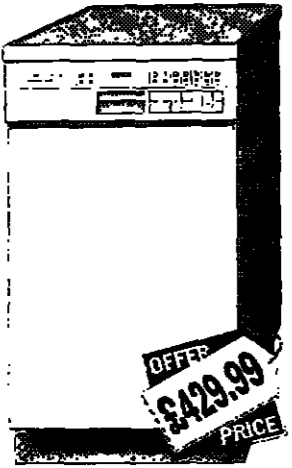
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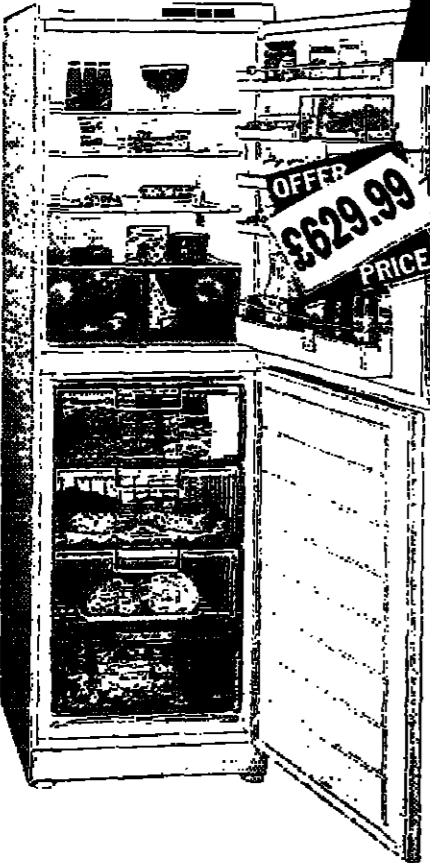


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Damian Harris, right, and his Skint stable of stars: from left, Fatboy Slim, otherwise known as Norman Cook; Bentley Rhythm Ace; and the Lo-Fidelity All Stars. They could soon be marketed Sony

# Mr Skint strikes it rich

A tiny music company created by a record shop assistant behind a provincial solicitor's office is poised to sign a multimillion-pound deal with an international entertainment empire. Skint, founded in Brighton by Damian Harris, 28, is following the fashion for independent pop labels, the innovators of contemporary music, to be swallowed up by corporations known as "the majors". The trend began when the label Sire, co-founded in New York by Richard Gottschler, composer of the 1960s hit *My Boyfriend's Back*, was bought by Time Warner in 1980 so that it could get Madonna and the Pretenders on its books. Skint, whose artists have included the Lo-Fidelity All Stars, Bentley Rhythm Ace and Fatboy Slim, is the prime mover in the Big Beat movement, the latest disco craze which injects a sense of personality and humour into dance music. Sony, the Japanese multinational, has been

## Dominic Kennedy on an indie label owner who is about to hit the big time

holding secret talks to acquire a large stake in the little seaside company and a deal, making Mr Harris a wealthy man, is imminent. Skint's acts, who are at the cutting edge of British dance music, will join a stable containing such unlikely bedfellows as Leonard Cohen, Barbra Streisand, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen and Mariah Carey. Before finalising his deal Mr Harris travelled to Creation Records in London for advice from Alan McGee, the former punk rocker and reformed drug addict who discovered Oasis, the Jesus and Mary Chain and Teenage Fanclub. Mr McGee made a fortune by selling 49 per cent of his company to Sony for £25 million in 1992. He has since become a member of the new Labour establishment, donating £100,000 to Tony Blair, sitting

on Chris Smith's Creative Industries Taskforce and being invited to join a Police Federation committee on drugs. Mr Harris said: "I had all these qualms about the majors. He just put it very straight, as someone who has been right in the thick of it. He has been quite inspiring." Skint has made Brighton the capital of youth culture for the first time since Mods and Rockers waged war on the beaches during the 1960s. The movement takes its name from the Big Beat Boutique, a club that revived the seaside tradition of variety for a new generation by mixing a selection of acid jazz with acid house. The trend is synonymous with laddish bands. Even their humour is appropriately seaside-postcard. Fans find it hilarious to refer to Bentley

Rhythm Ace by the band's initials. The Lo-Fis have sampled Jack and Vera Duckworth of *Coronation Street*. The most experienced star of Skint is Fatboy Slim, the latest reincarnation of Norman Cook, that part of the Eighties pop band the Housemartins (*Happy Hour, Caravan of Love*) that did not become the Beautiful South. Instead, Cook became Beats International, who reached No 1 in 1991 with *Dub Be Good To Me*. Independent labels have little choice but to make deals with the big corporations, which have the money to invest in star names and can get records distributed worldwide. Otherwise artists leave. But a backlash has begun. The British label ZTT, which discovered Seal, sold half its assets to Time Warner in 1988 and bought them back last year. A ZTT source said: "The major is looking for big sales and huge artists to feed their machine and the independents feel that their creativity is stifled."

## Caitlin Moran on how to cash in and stay hip

THE difference between major labels (with big, brash names such as EMI, Sony and Polydor) and indie labels (with their let's-be-as-silly-as-possible names such as Willa, Fierce Panda and One Little Indian) is much the same as that between a corner shop and Tesco. While Tesco has a fuller range of options, Mrs Crabapple will let you buy a roll of binbags and 20 Silk Cut on tick. Majors foster ambitious Pop Stars who want to get to No 1; indies foster Credible Artists who can't get any higher than No 17. This is why, when an independent label is bought by a major, the age-old conundrum of "Are they selling out just in order to sell?" rears its head. Rock history contains many self-out horror stories. The mighty Elektra was founded as a folk label in 1951 and, 15 years later, had a roster that was the envy of the music industry, including the Doors, Tim Buckley and The Stooges. When WEA bought Elektra in 1971, the company immediate-

## Sold out, without losing their soul

ly went downhill, signing the New Seekers. You don't need to have the Doors and the Stooges on your label for a major to covet you. In 1991, a fledgling Ocean Colour Scene signed to a tiny independent which, in the tradition of indies, was called Phffft. Fontana coveted Ocean Colour Scene and bought Phffft outright. Unfortunately, Ocean Colour Scene did not get on with their new boss, Dave Bates, who fostered bizarre desires: to wit, that all his bands should sound the same. Forced to record an album of doomy indie horror that they hated, the band ran up debts of half a million pounds with Fontana,

who then refused to release the album and subsequently dropped them. Sadder but wiser, Ocean Colour Scene were much more picky when they got their second deal with their current label MCA, who allow them to sound like Cream and wear silly beanie hats to their hearts' content. These days, bands signing to indies are much more aware that their tiny, friendly label is quite likely to become Jonah to a major-label whale; and sign contracts with a "key-man" clause, which basically states: "We signed to Dave Lovely at MCA Records; and if he isn't bought into Megalith Inc as our boss, we're off." Oasis have one with Creation/Sony, as do Blur with EMI and the Verve with Virgin. And so, with one magical contractual innovation, bands have finally gained the life-enriching ability to sell without selling out. Who would ever have thought it would be lawyers who solved every hipster's biggest nightmare?

## SALE TUNES IN TO SIXTIES STYLE

A JUMBLE of pop memorabilia will go on sale at Christie's East, New York, next month, including a psychedelic range of objects from the estate of Timothy Leary, the guru of the "flower child" counter-culture of 1960s America (Tunku Varadarajan writes). The auction, one of the largest to be held of objects from the pop age, includes items once worn, played, read or painted by such as Bob Marley, Janis Joplin, the Beatles, Elton John, the Rolling Stones, Sid Vicious, Jimi Hendrix and Elvis Presley. Leary's personal effects include an Egyptian hookah estimated to fetch about £5,000, several jackets — none of sober hue — and his dog-eared driving licence. The most expensive items are the guitars once owned by Marley and Hank Williams. Marley's 12-string acoustic Hohner from the mid-1970s is estimated at £95,000-£125,000, as is the guitar which belonged to the "country king" Williams, an acoustic Southern Jumbo Gibson from the 1950s. Clothes once worn by Joplin include cheesecloth, velvet and flares, head necklaces and feather boas. A pair of her bell-bottom trousers with a red satin flower sewn on the seat is expected to fetch about £4,500.



Leary's hookah

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# New lessons in how to be top

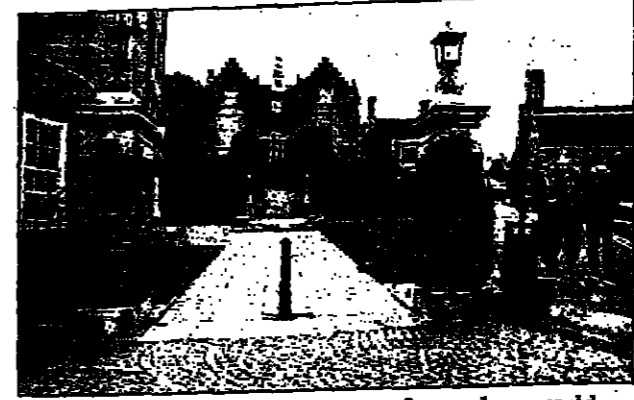


Famous old boys who followed a tradition of leadership: a young Winston Churchill, left, and Robin Butler standing tall (back row, centre)



### Rugby pitch and rifle range lose out to teamwork classes as Harrow breeds leaders of future, writes David Charter

The school that nurtured Winston Churchill's has decided that the rugby pitch and rifle range no longer equip boys for the roles of responsibility they will take in later life. Harrow is to introduce leadership training to prepare a new generation of gentlemen for the modern world.



Harrow: adapting to changes of a modern world

The school that nurtured Winston Churchill's has decided that the rugby pitch and rifle range no longer equip boys for the roles of responsibility they will take in later life. Harrow is to introduce leadership training to prepare a new generation of gentlemen for the modern world.

Mr Bomford said: "What I was particularly anxious to do was focus to get away from the idea of leadership as something being exercised by an individual with authority over others, to get people to think about responsibility and teamwork."

The school is reflecting a demand from employers and universities for all students to become better at communication and working in teams. Harrow's first leadership training course this summer will run over two days for all boys in the lower sixth, covering cerebral team challenges rather than testing the individual's physical resolve.

Mr Bomford said: "The danger is that one concentrates on the natural leaders and gives them the positions of responsibility through the various activities which go on, and one ignores those who are more introspective and reserved and not the natural leaders."

But it is no longer seen as enough. Mr Bomford added: "The school is reflecting a demand from employers and universities for all students to become better at communication and working in teams."

Mr Bomford said: "The danger is that one concentrates on the natural leaders and gives them the positions of responsibility through the various activities which go on, and one ignores those who are more introspective and reserved and not the natural leaders."

### BOYS' TWO-DAY COURSE IN THINKING

Day one: timed practical and theoretical challenges, for example devising how to remove a flask from a rope-off area, which the boys are not allowed to enter, using equipment such as ropes and elastic. Also crisis management games in teams, such as how to complete an expedition crossing a desert when one of the party falls ill with hundreds of miles to cover and limited amounts of water, fuel and equipment.



Bomford: team work

Day two: job applications and interview techniques. Boys will be asked to prepare written approaches to various companies. They give oral presentations individually and in groups, such as how they would organise installing a fire-proof safe over the weekend on a tight budget with problems of manoeuvring it into the right room.

Mr Bomford said: "The danger is that one concentrates on the natural leaders and gives them the positions of responsibility through the various activities which go on, and one ignores those who are more introspective and reserved and not the natural leaders."

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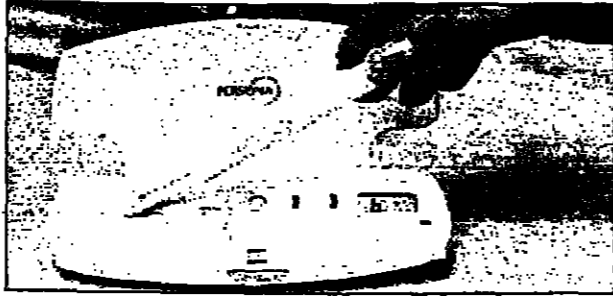
## Bulgaria in Crisis

...to the ...

كوزمان الدول

# GPs warned over contraceptive kit that keeps failing

Health chiefs say computer 'may not be ideal' to avoid pregnancy, reports Dominic Kennedy



The Persona: lights show when a woman is fertile

THE handheld computer marketed as the biggest breakthrough in contraception since the Pill was yesterday branded by the Government as unsuitable for couples who definitely do not want a baby.

Persona, which has been bought by 100,000 British women, is six times more likely to result in pregnancy than the combined Pill.

Alan Kent, chief executive of the Medical Devices Agency, alerted all general practitioners and family planning clinics with the warning: "Persona may not be suitable for couples who would find an unplanned pregnancy completely unacceptable."

Lawyers are preparing claims against Unipath, Persona's manufacturer, after hundreds of users became pregnant, including one who had triplets. At least 60 users a month have abortions.

Persona took 15 years and £20 million to develop. A start-up pack costs £49.95, then £9.95 a month for test sticks that are used to analyse urine samples to help women to decide when to avoid unprotected sex.

Jeremy Metters, the Government's deputy Chief Medical Officer, said that users should get medical advice: "Family planning is about the couples using the method best suited to their needs. For people who don't want to get pregnant, Persona may not be a good idea. For other women who wouldn't mind an unplanned pregnancy it would be perfectly acceptable. Couples must understand the risk that the woman might become pregnant."

The makers have refused to hand full data of their medical trial of 700 women to the Department of Health; as a result, the Government cannot endorse the success rate of 94 per cent claimed on packets. That reliability figure means six women out of every 100 users would get pregnant in a year, not counting pregnan-

cies caused by couples making mistakes with the computer. Even if the 94 per cent figure is correct, it is the least reliable of all the 13 methods of contraception used in Britain, according to the independent Family Planning Association. Fewer than one woman in 100 would get pregnant in a year using the combined Pill, injectable contraception, sterilisation or a hormone-based intrauterine device. If their partners use condoms, two would have babies.

The Roman Catholic Church supported the Persona because it uses the principles of the rhythm method, by programming a computer to work out which times of the month a woman is fertile. But according to the FPA, the device is not the most effective form of natural family planning. Using a thermometer to calculate a woman's safe period, a technique known as the "sympto-thermal method", is

up to 98 per cent effective. The Persona's computer uses a "traffic light" system, which glows red on days when intercourse is risky, green when it is safe and yellow when a new sample is needed. The FPA said that the product had been hyped as an exciting new method: "However, the method is not new - it is technology drawing on the practices of natural family planning methods."

Early warning in *The Times* last November

method is not new - it is technology drawing on the practices of natural family planning methods. Anne Weyman, chief executive of the FPA, said that Persona was suitable for "the woman in a stable relationship who is possibly considering a family at some point and who won't be devastated if she discovers herself pregnant". Results of the trials have yet to be published in any learned medical journal, more than a year after it came on the market in Britain. America has tougher rules on selling medical devices, and another trial must be held before Persona can be launched there with claims about reliability.

Unipath responded yesterday by sending a letter to GPs urging them to include Persona in the range of options they discuss with patients. Keith May, Unipath's vice-president of research and independent, said: "As with all methods of contraception, Unipath are the first to acknowledge that Persona is not suitable for everyone. Persona is a very attractive option for women who are spacing the arrival of their children or who are intending to have a family in the future."



Dissatisfied customers: Christopher and Rosemarie Beckett with their triplets

## Three little surprises who beat the lights

By Dominic Kennedy

ROSEMARIE BECKETT had hoped to delay having another baby until her 19-month-old daughter Danielle began school. Keen to abandon the Pill because of a family history of blood clots, she was delighted to hear about the Persona.

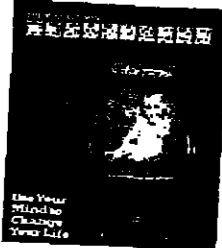
Five months after she began using the device - restricting sex with her husband Chris to days when the light was green - she fell pregnant. Mrs Beckett, 23, from Hastings, said: "Then the hospital told me I was expecting triplets. I was totally shocked."

The *Times* disclosed last November that eight legal-aid certificates had been issued to women who want to sue Unipath, the manufacturers, and Boots, which had exclusive sale rights for the first year.

The support of the Roman Catholic Church has been crucial: sales in Ireland were twice as high as predicted. Before it was available in the Republic, women crossed the border to Belfast and London-derry to buy the Persona.

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## Traffic light kit failed to stop babies

Early warning in *The Times* last November

method is not new - it is technology drawing on the practices of natural family planning methods.

Unipath responded yesterday by sending a letter to GPs urging them to include Persona in the range of options they discuss with patients.

## Bulgaria in Crisis

Emergency Appeal to Times Readers

LEFT TO FREEZE Children like Yordan, 1½, already malnourished could die from cold and hunger this January unless aid reaches them now. With temperatures plummeting to -15° Yordan's scant clothing and no shoes offer him little protection from the bitter cold and there is no money to heat his orphanage. There are 37,000 places in Bulgaria's orphanages.



Cold weather alert

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# Final tragedy of two forgotten soldiers

There will be no proud descendants to honour Frank King and George Anderson when they are buried in France 81 years after their deaths in the First World War

By ALAN HAMILTON  
MICHAEL EVANS  
STEPHEN FARRELL  
AND PAUL WHITTAKER

It is one of the small but enduring tragedies of the Great War that there will be no descendants at the graveside, no great-grandchildren to honour their memory, when privates Frank King and George Anderson are reburied in April, 81 years after they fell in the mud and blood of northern France.

But at least we now know who they are, and their names can be removed from the sad roll-call of 35,000 men missing, presumed killed, which scrolls endlessly down the war memorial at Arras. They will now have their own headstones in the British war cemetery at the village of Monchy-le-Preux, close to where they died in the great Spring Offensive of 1917.

Archaeologists searching for a Celtic settlement near the French village in 1996 uncovered a shallow mass grave containing the remains of 27 British soldiers. The remains of King and Anderson were the only ones that could be identified, because their dog-tags had survived, along with a belt buckle and buttons that provided the evidence that they were men of the 13th Battalion, the Royal Fusiliers.

Two Ministry of Defence historians succeeded in tracing the barest details of their lives. *The Times* has pursued the trail further, to the unhappy conclusion that the direct family line of both men has ended. War Office records that might have helped to trace descendants were lost in the Blitz in 1940. The nearest-of-kin at the reinterment are likely to be the couple, entirely unrelated, who now live in the house once occupied by Frank King's family and who have been touched by the tale of a forgotten soldier.

There were several battles of Arras. The one that killed privates King and Anderson began on April 9, 1917, and ended on April 14. The 13th Battalion was then part of the 37th Division and the attack by the Allied forces covered a front of nearly 15 miles, from south of Givenchy-en-Gohelle, past Vimy, the River Scarpe, Arras and the River Cojeul, nearly to Croisilles.

The weather had broken; it was cold and on April 2 it began to snow. On the Arras battlefield there were a number of Royal Fusilier battalions waiting to take part in the struggle. The job of the 13th Battalion, along with others, was to capture Monchy-le-Preux on its small hill. They began their



Hampton in the early 1900s. Frank King's family lived in the village until 1931



The dog-tags that enabled the men to be identified and Frank King's name on the memorial

attack at dusk and succeeded in taking the village but with heavy losses. Colonel Layton, the commanding officer, reported: "I consider that the battalion behaved magnificently and I have nothing but praise for everyone in it."

The memorial in the Faubourg d'Armeny cemetery at Arras, with its 35,000 names of those whose bodies were never recovered, is a testament to the slaughter of one small part of the western front. There are others, such as that at Thiepval Ridge, with nearly twice as many names of the missing, overlooking the neat acres of Commonwealth war cemeteries with their headstones white as bleached bones drilled in immaculate rows.

Frank Harold King and George Hamilton Anderson were two among hundreds of thousands of ordinary, anonymous young men who answered the call of Kitchener's pointing finger with little thought of heroism or glory. In the

case of Frank King, there is an additional sadness. He had a brother, Albert, who was also killed in the war and whose body was never found. Private Albert King served with the 10th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment. He went to the western front on July 19, 1915, and died on the Somme on July 3, 1916. His name is among the 66,000 missing listed on Lutyens's brooding memorial at Thiepval Ridge. A second brother, George, the oldest of the three, also died in the war but it is not clear when.

Frank King first went to the western front on December 2, 1915. He was 23 and single when he died. His father, George, a builder and carpenter, lived in a tiny rented semi-detached house at 1 Satchfield Villas, Plevna Road, in the village of Hampton, southwest London, a mile from Walsey's palace by the Thames. The yellow-brick houses,

built in 1885 during the Russo-Turkish war that gave the street its name, were designed to cost the artisan classes £250 and the Kings' immediate neighbours were a domestic footman, an engine stoker and a police constable.

The house overlooks St Mary the Virgin, once the parish church of Hampton Court Palace, where the name Frank H. King appears in gold lettering among a list of men on an oak chancel screen, dedicated in 1920 as a war memorial to the fallen of the parish.

King appears to have left no children and almost nothing is known of him after he enlisted into obscurity, one of hundreds of local men to do so. He would have attended drill halls near Bushy Park and Hampton Hill before departing, to his fate by tram to Hounslow, from where men were despatched to Sheerness and other ports on their way to the Continent. George King, his wife, Elizabeth,



French cadets paying their respects at the memorial to those missing, presumed killed

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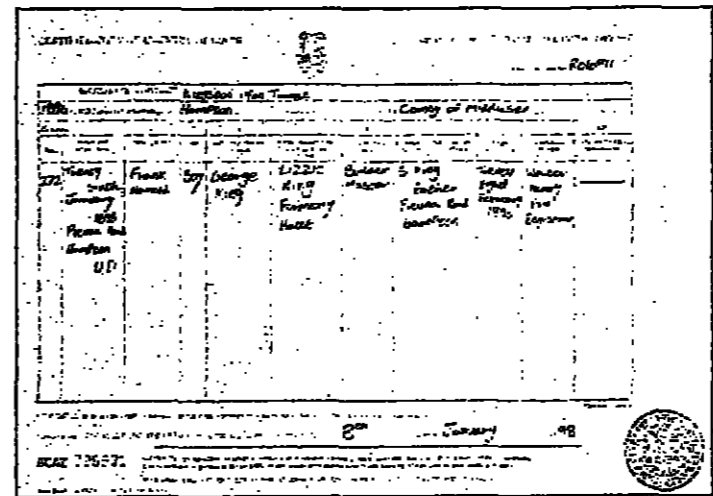
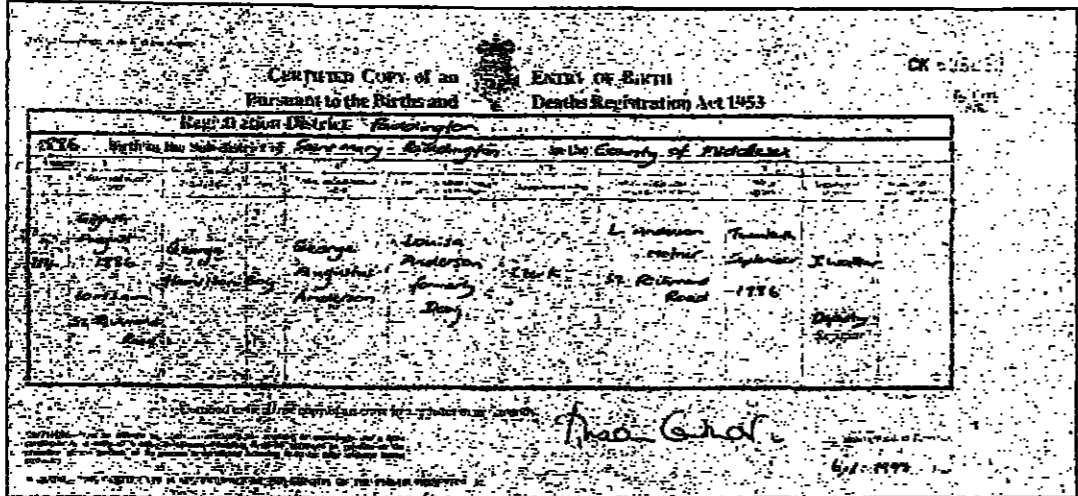
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British troops advancing at Arras during the great Spring Offensive of 1917 in which Frank King and George Anderson died. Their bodies lay in a mass shallow grave until found by archaeologists last year



Anderson was born in 1886 and King ten years later. They were two among hundreds of young men who answered the call of Kitchener's finger in 1914

and daughter Lilian continued to live at Plevna Road until 1931, by which time the father was running a building business in Twickenham. Their house later became 9 Plevna Road and was converted to a larger detached building when a bomb demolished number 11 next door in 1940.

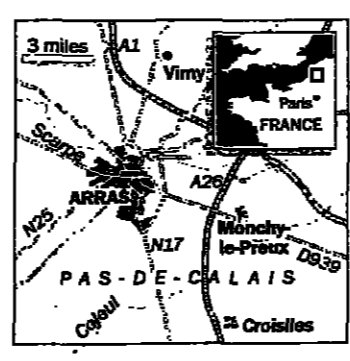
The Ministry of Defence has managed to trace no living relatives. But Robin Furr, 66, and his wife, Bridget, 59, the house's present occupants and both keen local historians, feel for the forgotten soldier. They confirmed yesterday that they would try to attend the reinterment in France in April. "We would like to go. We are interested in the history of the house and it would be nice for somebody to represent him, especially if there is going to be no one else there," Mr Furr said.

George Anderson entered life a notch further up the social ladder. He was born on August 8, 1886, into

a large professional household in Paddington, West London. His birth certificate shows his father to have been George Augustus Anderson, a clerk, and his mother Louisa, formerly Day. It is not known what became of his twin sister, Sarah Haidee, born 15 minutes before him at the family home at 52 Richmond Road.

The 1891 census records show nine people, including several boarders and a servant, living at the Anderson home, with the head of the household listed as George Anderson, a teacher aged 70, who was probably young George's grandfather. Several other relatives living at no 52 were also listed as teachers, suggesting that Mr Anderson senior may have run a private school.

Young George married Alice Maud White and the couple lived at one stage in Dollis Hill, North London. They had one daughter, Evalina Alice Anderson, in 1912;



she later married Frank Collis and moved to Witham, Essex, and eventually died at Broomfield Hospital in August 1963.

Evalina's husband survived her and remarried but his few living relatives remember little of his first wife, except that she told the family her father had died in the First World War and had left his widow a good pension. In fact George's will shows that he left

£191 0s 6d to Alice, who in her turn died in 1957 leaving £3,136 15s 4d to their daughter.

Part of the street in which George Anderson was born was demolished in 1937 and it was renamed Chepstow Road. His name is not among those of 43 servicemen from Paddington borough whose names are carved in the war memorial that once stood in the town hall but is now in a chapel of St James's church, Sussex Gardens. The chapel bears the name "Arras, 1917".

Perhaps the saddest record left of the brief lives of these soldiers is the short will written by George Anderson when he was with the 105th Training Battalion Royal Fusiliers, nearly five months before he died in the Battle of Arras.

Dated November 23, 1916, Private Anderson wrote: "In the event of my death I give a keepsake from my household effects selected by my wife to Poppy Elphick and Eva Anderson (daughter). To my friend

Harry Harrie I leave my gold band ring. The remainder of my household effects, life insurance & money & interest in 67 Deswbury Road I leave to my wife Alice Anderson." It is signed G. H. Anderson.

At the outbreak of the war George Anderson was a wholesale warehouseman. He and Frank King seemed unexceptional men and there are millions like them who have no obituary, no fame, and no individual place in history. But all who fought and died in the Great War were exceptional men whose blind sacrifice could not be summoned today. The lucky ones are those whose deeds live on in the memories of their descendants; Frank and George were not so fortunate.

The Ministry of Defence has set up a telephone line for anyone who can claim a family connection to either soldier and who might want to attend the burial. The number is 01980 615790.



Exceptional men, but few have their own place in history

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# Reforms to go 'full monty', Blair tells Japanese

FROM PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR, IN TOKYO

TONY BLAIR delivered a warning to critics in his own party yesterday that he would go the "full monty" in modernising Britain and turning it into an investment haven as a "model 21st-century economy".

He also issued a surprise rebuke to leaders of the crisis-ridden Asian economies, telling them that they would have to make hard choices to restore confidence and advising them against adopting "inappropriate policies".

Mr Blair used his first substantial speech of the year — to an audience of leading industrialists in Tokyo — to bang the drum for Britain as the best bet in Europe for overseas investment.

He responded to growing signs of unease among Labour activists by telling doubters that it might be a long haul before the full fruits of the Government's decisions were seen. He said his administration would not be deflected by short-term considerations from reforming the welfare state and making it fit for the next century, putting through the biggest changes in education for 50 years and ending the cycles of boom and bust that had dogged Britain.

His decision to use such a big international address for a clear domestic message was a signal of his readiness to face internal revolts in the interests of Labour's wider aims. He coupled an assurance to Japan of Labour's pro-Europeanism and support in principle for the single currency with sharp

words over the state of the Japanese and other Asian economies. He said that, in today's markets, inappropriate policies quickly came to grief. Globalisation must be accompanied by sound domestic policies and well-regulated financial structures.

Mr Blair was clearly reflecting the fears of European governments that the difficulties in Asia would spill over and hamper their economic reform plans. He said he did not want to exaggerate the scale of the problems, but they had a worldwide impact. He called for the adoption of "sound domestic policies and well-regulated financial structures". While he was confident that the difficulties would be overcome, transparency, good governance,

tough financial supervision and regulatory reform were needed if the economies were to recover. "In a global market today, you are up to the mark with your policies and succeed, or you are found out very quickly and you fail."

Mr Blair's mission to Tokyo is designed to convince leading industries that Britain is the best bet for investment in Europe despite its decision to stay out of the single currency, at least for the time being. Within an hour of arriving in the Japanese capital yesterday, Mr Blair hailed the decision by Toyota to invest a further £50 million in its Deeside engine plant for cars being made in France. The project will create more than



Tony Blair and his wife Cherie arriving at Tokyo's Hanada Airport yesterday

300 jobs. Mr Blair said it confirmed Britain as the most competitive location for making cars in Europe and underlined Toyota's commitment.

He promised that Britain would play the "honest broker" during its six-month presidency of the EU, in ensuring the single currency was launched successfully. He emphasised that the Government had no insuperable ob-

jections to joining the euro. It had good reasons for not taking part in the first wave, and before any decision was taken there would need to be a period of settled convergence, stability and preparation.

He assured Japan that Britain would do its best to make the single currency work and would prepare for it.

But the Prime Minister's central message was that the

Government was interested in long-term improvements to the economy and was prepared for short-term unpopularity, including revolts from its own side.

Many of the Prime Minister's audience of 350 Japanese "opinion-formers" chuckled when he said that he intended to go the "full monty" over economic reform.

He has yet to see the British film about five unemployed workers who strip to make ends meet. But Alastair Campbell, his press secretary, has seen it and it was shown on the aircraft flying Mr Blair through the night to Japan.

The movie is apparently striking a chord in Tokyo. According to observers, many unemployed Japanese, like the men in the film, go out in the mornings rather than admitting to their wives that they have lost their jobs.

## British screen life in the raw

By Polly Newton

JAPANESE cinema-goers are about to experience the rebranding of Britain — but not, perhaps, in the way that Tony Blair intended.

Of 17 films selected for inclusion in this year's UK98 Festival in Japan, aimed at promoting all things British, not one is a costume drama of the kind perfected by Merchant Ivory.

Helena Bonham Carter has been usurped by the Spice Girls (*Spice World* — *The Movie*), Mr Bean (*Bean*) and a fictional Glaswegian bus driver who falls in love with a Nicaraguan dancer (*Carla's Song*), directed by Ken Loach.

Other productions showing for the first time in Japan include *Nil by Mouth*, Gary Oldman's harrowing autobiographical account of a London childhood marred by violence, and *Career Girls*, the latest offering from celebrated British director, Mike Leigh.

*Twin Town*, from the producer of *Trainspotting*, is a tale of murder, drugs and corrupt policemen in Swansea. *Welcome to Sarajevo*, about the conflict in former Yugoslavia, and *Brassed Off*, chronicling the traumatic effect of redundancies on a grimy Yorkshire pit village, will also hit Japanese screens for the first time.

There is a Derek Jarman retrospective, Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* and the comedy *Shooting Fish*. Stephen Fry appears as Oscar Wilde in *Wilde*, the story of the disgraced gay playwright.

# Jobless rate forces Jospin-Kohl rethink

FROM DEBORAH COLLICUTT IN FRANKFURT AND BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

GERMANY and France were both compelled to reveal radical measures over their unemployment problems yesterday.

In an embarrassing U-turn on his pledge to halve the unemployment rate by the year 2000, Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, was forced to abandon his goal after the latest jobless statistics showed yet another record increase.

The Federal Labour Office announced that unemployment hit a postwar high of 4.546 million, or 11.9 per cent, in December, up 20,000 on the previous month when adjusted to take in factors such as part-time and seasonal work.

Two years ago, when German unemployment stood at four million, Herr Kohl promised to get half of those out of work back into jobs by the end of the century, but yesterday the Chancellor had to admit defeat.

"It now appears that this absolute goal will certainly not be achieved," he told journalists during a break in a day-long meeting with his Christian Democrat Union (CDU) party in Windhagen. But he added: "I am holding on to the goal of cutting unemployment as fast as possible."

The announcement was of little surprise to employers, trade unions and even some in the Cabinet, who long ago abandoned the target. Instead of falling, unem-

ployment has increased by another 500,000 since 1996 and most economists do not expect a significant change in the upward trend this year.

Bernhard Jagoda, the president of the Federal Labour Office, said the economy had picked up slightly at the end of 1997, but not enough to reduce the jobless total. The increase was caused mainly by further lay-offs in the eastern German construction sector.

The unadjusted unemployment level also notched up another postwar record in December, at 4.522 million or 11.8 per cent, up 200,000 from November.

Herr Jagoda told a press conference at the labour office headquarters in Nuremberg that Germany's export sector

was the main engine for growth, but had no comfort for the former communist east, where unemployment rose to just short of 20 per cent last month.

In France, Lionel Jospin, the Prime Minister, promised to set up a Fr1 billion (£100 million) emergency unemployment fund to end three weeks of jobless protests that have divided the Socialist-led Cabinet. The aid would be followed by long-term job-creation measures to help the 3.1 million French people out of work, Mr Jospin said, seeking to extricate himself from the worst crisis of his seven months in office.

Union leaders and left-wing political leaders welcomed the aid offer, but four of the five main unemployment groups rejected it as inadequate. Militant demonstrators vowed to continue sit-ins at welfare offices.

More than two dozen unemployment centres have been occupied by protesters demanding a one-off Christmas bonus of Fr3,000 each, which would amount to a sum nine times larger than that pledged yesterday. "We are extremely disappointed," said Clare Villiers of the Act Against Unemployment group. "Economic recovery has broadened and solidified, structural reforms have made progress, but the jobs market has benefited little."



Jospin: hopes £100m aid will end protests

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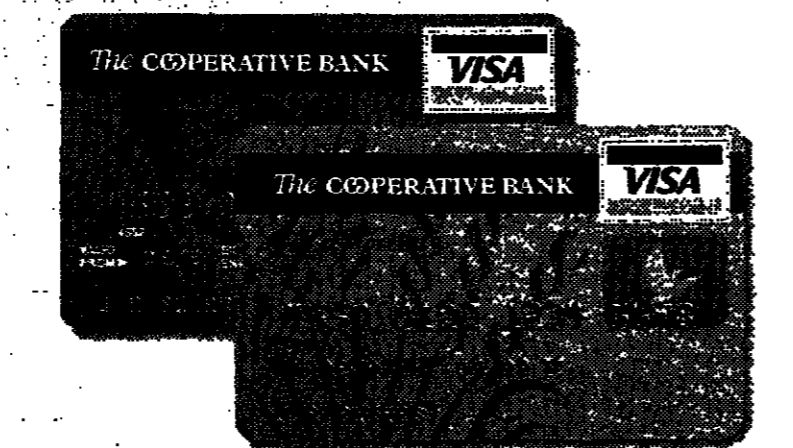
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# Clinton and IMF go to Jakarta's rescue

FEARS that Indonesia's economy is on the brink of collapse were heightened yesterday by reports that only 22 of the 282 companies listed on the Jakarta stock exchange are financially viable.

But the worst week in more than three decades for Asia's most battered tiger economy ended on a calmer note after intervention by President Clinton and the International Monetary Fund.

Mr Clinton last night launched an emergency initiative to stem the Asian financial crisis and pull Indonesia back from the brink of economic disaster as the value of the country's currency continued to tumble on world markets.

After a personal telephone call to President Suharto, Mr Clinton sent Larry Summers, the Deputy Treasury Secretary, to Singapore and Jakarta today. The IMF announced that its two top officials would also travel to the Far East to accelerate Indonesia's \$43 billion (£26.8 billion) bail-out.

Both the IMF and the Administration have blamed the Suharto regime for the failure of Indonesia's rescue package to restore financial

Most stock exchange companies are technically bankrupt, Tom Rhodes and A Special Correspondent write

security and said earlier this week that the fund, which distributed \$3 billion when the package was announced in November, would refuse to provide the next instalment due in mid-March unless reforms were implemented.

In what the White House



Suharto, regime blamed for failed rescue package

described as a double-edged message, the President told Mr Suharto that Washington was ready to support Indonesia in its time of crisis, but only if the Jakarta regime was serious about implementing economic reforms.

The atmosphere in Jakarta remains nervous. Rumours that tanks were on the streets and that Mr Suharto had fled the country prompted many people to stay at home until mid-morning. Panic buying on Thursday of food and basic necessities continued, although many shops remained closed or opened only for a few hours.

An armed forces spokesman said yesterday that the capital was on a level-three alert, meaning the situation was calm but that reinforcements had been brought in.

Mohammad Syahrial, a financial analyst, was quoted in the press yesterday as saying

that "when one compares the current assets of all listed companies with their liabilities, we find only 22 companies will survive the current crisis. The remainder have technically gone bankrupt".

A European analyst agreed. "The Indonesian corporate sector is in a terrible mess. If things don't improve rapidly, mass bankruptcies and unemployment will be the order of the day. That could lead to enormous unrest."

Danuk Bagtneo, the deputy chairman of Indonesia's only functioning trade union, said yesterday that if the crisis continues more than three million full-time employees and many more part-time workers would lose their jobs this year.

Mr Clinton told Mr Suharto in a 25-minute telephone conversation that the world's fourth largest nation had to bite the bullet and follow through with promised reforms. Mr Suharto agreed and said he would "seriously implement" the reforms, according to his spokesman.

Leading article, page 23  
Debt fears, page 28



One of the balloonists bales out of Global Hilton yesterday after it started to leak helium

# Pilots parachute from 'gas bomb' leaking balloon

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

A ROGUE balloon with tanks full of propane was weaving around the sky over New Mexico yesterday after Dick Rutan, the latest balloonist to fail to fly around the globe non-stop, parachuted to safety with his co-pilot.

Mr Rutan, 60, who was a pilot in the Vietnam War, and Dave Melton abandoned their attempt two hours after take-off. They touched down 11 miles south of Vaughn, nearly 100 miles from Albuquerque.

In an interview broadcast from the landing site, Mr Rutan, still wearing a crash helmet and his face streaked with blood, said they had decided jumping was "the safest thing to do" because the balloon still had several tanks of potentially explosive propane on board. Later their spokesman, Tom Garrity, said Mr Melton had dislocated a hip.

Mr Rutan said that if any of the tanks had exploded as they descended, the blast could have knocked the balloon out of control, leaving them no chance of survival.

"We were scared," he said. There was no indication where the balloon would come down. New Mexico is one of America's least-populated states, but the possibility of it crashing in an inhabited area could not be ruled out.

Yesterday's attempts took place three days late after unkind weather forced a postponement.

A tear in the helium cell of the 170ft balloon, the Global Hilton, caused Mr Rutan to abort the flight. There have been other failed attempts this month at a non-stop journey by fellow Americans Steve Fossett and Kevin Ulissi, and the Swiss, Bertrand Piccard who, with Briton Andrew Elson, is expected to try again next week.

Global Hilton had lifted off at 6.17am yesterday, floating gently eastward over the Sandia Mountains. Mr Rutan had planned to ascend to 32,000ft to catch the jetstream, and then to ride currents which reach 200mph. This could have led to a global circumnavigation in about 14 days.

# Mother is guilty of abusing daughter who weighed 680lb

BY TUNKU VARADARAJAN

THE mother of Christina Corrigan, the Californian 13-year-old who died of apparent heart failure last November weighing 680lb, her body covered in bedsores and faeces, was found guilty by a judge yesterday of child abuse.

Marlene Corrigan, who maintained that she did everything she could to help Christina, was cleared on more serious felony charges.

Corrigan, whose lawyers say she will appeal, will be sentenced next month. The misdemeanour of child abuse carries a maximum sentence of a year's imprisonment. The felony, however, could have meant up to six years in jail.

The case has attracted considerable interest in America, where as many as one in four children is clinically obese. Fat rights activists, an increasingly vocal constituency, have said all along that the charges were the product of prejudice against fat people.

In an interview with The Times last week, Marilyn Wann, one of America's leading fat rights campaigners, alleged that Corrigan was prosecuted solely because of Christina's size. She said: "It's



Christina had not seen a doctor for five years

not a crime to be fat. It's not a crime to have a fat child."

Judge Richard Arason, however, ruled that the profusion of bed sores on Christina's body — there was scarcely a portion unaffected — constituted clear evidence of neglect. He was unmoved by the defence's contention that Corrigan was unaware of the sores as "Christina never allowed her mother to see her undressed". The judge noted, also, that although the mother had claimed to have taken Christina to see a doctor "more than 90 times", the visits had stopped in 1991.

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At the Bulgarian border, a 12 pack of beer gets you through quicker than a valid passport. Having seen off crazy French motorists, delays in Vienna, and torrential rain in Serbia, we're dealing with dodgy border guards at the crossing into Bulgaria. We've only managed 2 hours kip each in the last 2 days, and there's been no time to stop and eat. So we're living off rice cakes (covered in jam no less), tinned ham and wagon wheels. Roll on the next 18,000 miles!

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# French fathom tunnel to success

### Ben Macintyre reports how the Channel rail link is transforming a Kent town into a little France, with business in baguettes flourishing

ASHFORD in Kent is preparing to turn itself into Ashford-sur-Seine this year, when an entire open-air French food market moves into the high street in symbolic recognition of the town's new status as a booming outpost of France.

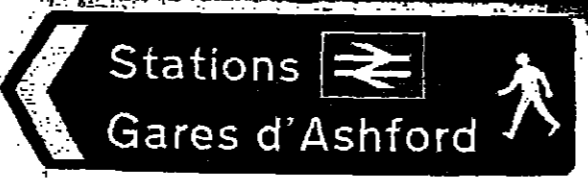
Just yards from the bingo hall and in place of stalls offering cut-price underwear and Pippins, will be a tempting selection of pâté de foie gras, baguettes and Beaujolais, cognac and camembert. For one day a week, Kent accents will give way to the unfamiliar cries of French street traders.

The plan to import the fresh food market from the northern French city of Lille is only the latest sign of a strange cultural transformation under way in Ashford, due to the building of the Channel Tunnel, the sudden proximity of the Continent and the arrival of a wave of French companies eager to transplant to what they say is Britain's more fertile economic soil. Kent remains the Garden of England, but in this corner of the garden the accent is increasingly French.

French companies are pouring into Ashford at a remarkable rate: 16 French businesses, lured by lighter British taxes, lower social charges and more flexible job regulation, have set up shop here, most in the last year.

At least a score more are believed to be on the way, and every week fresh inquiries from French firms keen to relocate arrive at the town's chamber of commerce.

"In five years this place will be unrecognisable," predicts Olivier Cadic, a 35-year-old Parisian entrepreneur who was among the first (and



certainly the loudest) French businessmen to raise the French tricolour in Ashford. M Cadic's decision to relocate much of his computer electronics firm, Info-Elec, with a turnover of £2.1 million, to Ashford in late 1996, was a calculated, public and exceedingly impolite gesture to the French Government in protest at the way that the French economy is run. This week, sitting in his new



Ashford's high street, where the entire market from Lille will move in

hosted a conference for French firms in Ashford, the association membership has tripled to more than 300 businesses. One Ashford property rental agency reported that the number of French people seeking accommodation has doubled in the past two months. The town's Continental Bakery and Patisserie is doing a crisp trade in croissants. Even McDonald's, in a gesture to Gallic café culture, has begun putting its tables on the street,

weather permitting. Jo James, sales manager at the Ashford Chamber of Commerce, has organised French language lessons for local retailers. Many town officials are also brushing up their French with a lunch-hour language tutor.

Like all new colonists, M Cadic admits he misses his home country while pointing out that he can be in Lille, Ashford's sister Eurostar stop in northern France, in one hour. "I hope my country will change so I can go home. But I have buried myself in work," he said.

Some of the new French arrivals have taken to commuting from Paris by train, according to Mrs James. Due to the time difference, the two-hour commute to Ashford is a peculiar one: an hour in one direction, and three in the other. She estimates that several hundred French people and their families have settled in the town.

"The next few years are going to be interesting. We'll have to be careful not to lose our culture, but I think we can find a happy medium," Mrs James said. "Now you hear people say, 'Let's go to Paris for lunch', which would have been unthinkable here."

WH Smith in the town appeared to be making a cross-cultural effort of sorts by selling copies of *Astérix in Britain*, but not all Ashford residents relish the influx. "I suppose I'll have to learn French now," remarked one disgruntled taxi driver.

The French magazine *L'Express* reported that at The Ticked Trout, the Ashford pub favoured by the new French businessfolk, there has been dark talk of renaming it *The Ticked Froggie*.

## De Gaulle's city goes British

GENERAL de Gaulle, the greatest anti-British President France has ever produced, must be turning in his grave. In the past few years more than 30 English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh pubs have opened in the elegant streets of his native city of Lille.

A good night out here is no longer a few glasses of Bordeaux and a game of *balootte* table football at the local *zinc* (bar), but a pint of Guinness drunk to the strains of Oasis at a pub like *Le Cambridge* or *L'Irlandais*, which is so popular that non-regulars are often

**Susan Bell tells how Lille found new life from just up the track**

turned away. The General would also be most upset to discover that Paul, one of Lille's most celebrated pâtisseries, has started selling British-style sandwiches. At lunchtime the queue of French people waiting to buy them is more than 20 deep.

A few streets away, Marks & Spencer cannot keep up with the demand for the egg

and cress and chicken tikka, and already plans to expand its premises.

In recent years more than 100 British businesses have come to Lille and never have so many British tourists flooded into the city. And yet appearances are deceptive. Fewer than 500 British people live in the city of one and a half million inhabitants and many

of them are here temporarily. The pub owners are not British, but French entrepreneurs who have spotted a successful trend. The British businesses based in Lille are largely UK acquisitions of French companies, run and staffed by French people.

France's high social charges make the sort of business relocations that are happening in Ashford far less attractive on this side of the Channel. So why have so many British companies put down roots in Lille?

The main reason is geography. Lille is the nearest European city to Britain. Only two hours from London by train, an hour from Paris and 38 minutes from Brussels, Lille is the ideal solution for British companies looking for a European distribution centre.

Sebastian Duprac, a development manager with APDM, the region's international development agency, believes that Lille's history as the cradle of France's industrial revolution has also played a significant role in its attraction to international investors. "We lost 200,000 jobs here when

Lille elegance, pubs and tikka sandwiches

the mines closed. People here are hungry to work. They want to be the best and they are not afraid of hard manual labour," said David Hinchcliffe, Lille's British vice-consul in charge of commerce, agrees and also cites local character. "People here are more Flemish than French; more businesslike and less Latin, which probably appeals to the British. In many ways they resemble astute Northern businessmen."

Lille's proximity to Britain is also a plus for many companies who fear they will lose staff by relocating to Paris. This was one factor which swayed Abbey National to choose Lille over Paris.



Olivier Cadic at Ashford's French-style bakery. His business charges are half what they are back home

## Smaller British costs are big lure

DRAMATICALLY reduced employment costs and lower taxes, effective transport links with Europe and the absence of red tape are among the key incentives luring a growing number of French firms to Britain.

Employing a worker on a salary of £10,000 in France can cost £4,800 in payroll taxes, compared to basic national insurance contributions of just £700 on the same annual salary in Britain.

High social security charges, national corporation taxes and local business taxes often make hiring staff in France prohibitively expensive for smaller firms, while Britain's more flexible working practices are an added attraction for French employers. The corporate tax on small business in Britain is 12 per cent lower than in France, while social charges are at least 20 per cent below.

Olivier Cadic, owner of Info-Elec, estimated that by moving to Britain and escaping a French wage bill his profits more than tripled. The top-rate personal tax in France is almost 57 per cent, while Britain's lower living costs, cheaper telephone rates and the brighter long-term prospects of the UK electronics industry are extra inducements for such companies to slip across the Channel.

"For businesses, the air is clearer here," M Cadic said. The Eurostar train service pions Paris and Brussels within just two hours of Ashford, while freight can be shipped to Europe through the Channel Tunnel from Folkestone, just 20 minutes away by road.

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# Russian mafia cash washes into London

INCREASINGLY powerful Russian crime syndicates are now laundering money on a grand scale in London and other European capitals, according to intelligence sources.

**Drugs money from East Europe is thought to be funding property deals in Britain, Michael Evans reports**

The dirty money has been acquired through drug trafficking, prostitution, extortion and fraud operations, and some of the gangsters are former KGB officers. The laundering is one of the huge challenges facing the intelligence and law enforcement agencies as they try to counter the rising threat from organised crime.

to other legitimate assets such as stocks and bonds, bearer shares and large property developments, and thus hidden. In Britain MI6, the Secret Intelligence Service, and MI5, the Security Service, are engaged in supporting the police by applying long-established

**6 About 1,000 Russian crime groups are operating internationally, each with 50 to 1,000 members**

In London, Russian criminal money is suspected of being behind a number of large property deals — all part of the process to make dirty money "legitimate" through a three-stage process: "placing", where money is removed from a criminal organisation to the first legitimate business, such as a bank or small firm; "layering", when it is mixed with the legitimate funds of that bank or firm; and "integration", where it is moved on

skills in covert penetration to try to gain insight into the Russian mafia's modus operandi. German research has estimated that, since the collapse of communism and Russia's embrace of market forces, about \$26 billion (£16 billion)

of illegal money, whether from criminal activities or unlawful "capital flight", has been removed from Russia and laundered throughout Europe and elsewhere. The law enforcement agencies in Switzerland put the figure nearer \$40 billion to \$50 billion, with an estimated annual outflow of about \$12 billion.

about 1,000 Russian organised crime groups are operating internationally — excluding the 10,000 in Russia itself — with each ranging in size from 50 to 1,000 members. All are engaged in systematic criminal business, often protected from the law with the help of corruption.

The recent spate of armed hijacking of luxury diplomatic cars in Brussels, revealed this week, had all the hallmarks of a Russian mafia operation. According to intelligence sources, Western cars are being stolen, not to provide comfortable motoring for Russian gangsters, but as payment for drug shipments from Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

For the burgeoning Russian mafia, which has done in a few years what the Italian Cosa Nostra took decades to achieve, car hijacking in Europe is big business. Brussels is a favourite capital for the gangsters because of the huge concentration of European Union, Nato and other delegations — all with fleets of expensive cars. However, Germany is the country most vulnerable to the carjackers, partly because of geography but also because of historic links between Russia and the former East Germany. A favoured transit route for the



stolen cars, according to the intelligence sources, is through Poland. One intelligence source said: "Car trafficking is an important part of the Russian mafia operation because the luxury cars are used as payment for drugs."

The first serious evidence that the tentacles of the Russian mafia had reached Britain came in 1993 when two Chechen envoys, Ruslan and Nasabek Utyev, were found in London, each with three bullets in the back of the head. Sent to Britain as economic advisers on Chechnya, they had arrived with huge sums of money to set up a consulate and to organise the printing of passports and postage stamps. They spent much of the funds entrusted to them on a luxury central London flat in Marylebone.

The Russian heavies also deal in "human traffic", sending shipments of prostitutes from Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, all the way to Beirut. The fear is that with European Union plans for an open-frontier regime in continental Europe, under the so-called Schengen agreement, the Russian mafia's traffic in drugs and people will be given an added boost.

Bulgaria is now the main transit point for drugs from Afghanistan into Russia and then out into European capitals. One intelligence source involved in monitoring the drug trafficking routes said that 70 per cent of heroin and opium smuggled into north-west Europe was coming from Afghanistan and then through

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. "One kilo of heroin priced at \$600 in Tajikistan increases to \$95,000 in Russia and \$100,000 in Western Europe," the source said.

In Russia itself, the authorities have struggled to keep pace with the takeover of legitimate businesses by crime syndicates. The latest Russian police figures reveal that 41,000 companies are now run by mafia groups, as well as 50 per cent of the banks and 80 per cent of the joint ventures with foreign capital. Nearly 30 Russian bankers have been murdered for failing to comply with the requirements of mafia godfathers.

One official estimate is that two thirds of the Russian economy is "under the sway" of the crime syndicates. Intelligence experts in the West express astonishment at these figures, but are inclined to believe them.

Russian syndicate bosses are sending their children to private schools and universities in Britain, elsewhere in Europe and in America.

In a recent student exchange between America and Russia, one US university accepted Russian students despite being told they were the children of mafia chiefs. They were the only Russians who could afford it.

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### WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

## Big freeze blacks out three million

Ottawa: Three million Canadians were still without electrical power yesterday as the worst ice storm of the century continued to ravage eastern Canada, closing airports, stranding trains and causing damage worth millions of dollars (Richard Cleroux writes). Canadians were reduced to a pioneer existence in cold, dark homes, relying on fires for heat and cooking on charcoal burners and camp stoves. Last night Ottawa declared a state of emergency, the first in its history. Millions of people were without power in upstate New York and the states of Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire. Flood-related accidents caused ten deaths in Alabama and Tennessee.

## Mermaid's head found

Copenhagen: Danish police retrieved the missing head of the Little Mermaid statue after it was left in a box outside a Copenhagen television station by a hooded man who escaped (Christopher Follett writes). The station had offered a £2,200 award for the head, which was cut off on Monday night. It was reported to be in fairly good condition apart from a few scratches, and is undergoing laboratory tests before being returned to the city council.

## Would-be envoy in gays row

Washington: Conservatives demanded that James Hormel, right, America's first openly homosexual nominee for an ambassadorship, be disqualified because he is donating money to upset President Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy on gays in the military (Tom Rhodes writes). Mr Hormel, 64, heir to a San Francisco Spam fortune, had his nomination for the Luxembourg post delayed by Congress last year after Republicans cited his long history of promoting gay rights.



## Israel contests Polish EU bid

Jerusalem: Senior Israeli officials will urge Britain next week to delay Poland's application for EU membership until it agrees to hand back Jewish property seized by the Nazis in 1939 (Christopher Walker writes). Naphtali Lavie of the World Jewish Restitution Organisation said the move was decided after Poland reneged on handing back a 60-room building in Lodz.

## Cook delays Wei meeting

London: The Foreign Office insisted that a full diary rather than fear of Chinese anger was the reason why Robin Cook refused to meet Wei Jingsheng, left, the Chinese dissident (Michael Binyon writes). The Foreign Secretary, who begins a Beijing visit next week, says he will meet Mr Wei as soon as possible on his return. The Chinese, who recently released Mr Wei after he had spent 18 years in jail, say he is a criminal and object to his engaging in any political activity.

## Airliner bomber marries

Seoul: Kim Hyon-hui, the North Korean who blew up a KAL Boeing 707 more than ten years ago, killing all 115 passengers, has married a South Korean man. Kim, who was given an amnesty after being sentenced to death in 1990, is being guarded by South Korean security agents, who are keeping her whereabouts secret for fear of her safety. (AFP)

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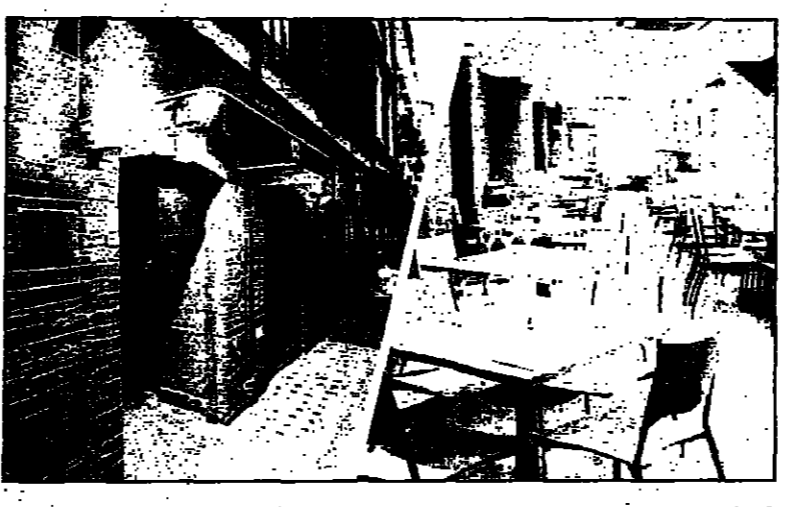
The day Brown did his duty

Paul Routledge, in the first of a series of extracts from his biography of the Chancellor, tells of the ultimate sacrifice

Commentators have always assumed that Gordon Brown made up his mind not to run for the Labour leadership over dinner with Tony Blair in Granada...

Peter Mandelson showed his hand to Gordon Brown in a letter that superficially offered him support but was plainly freighted with subversive intent...

who were briefing heavily and continuously against Brown. And it would have been a dirty war. Some anti-Brown campaigners were insinuating allegations about his private life...



Broken promise: Tony Blair had repeatedly assured Gordon Brown that he would not stand against him in a Labour leadership election...

on the economic side, with full approval for his "fairness agenda" broadening employment opportunities and improving training schools...

days ago and in Luton on Sunday, the Labour leadership election should be conducted with one consideration and one consideration only in mind...

MONDAY: PRIVATE LIFE OF GORDON BROWN

Shades of Godot from inside the bathroom

Do You Come Here Often? Vaudeville

Julian Clary was there in December. Kit and the Widow are currently giving regular performances at the same address. But Live at the Vaudeville...

Big freeze black at three million

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OBITUARIES

SIR MICHAEL TIPPETT

Sir Michael Tippett, OM, CH, CBE, died on January 8 aged 93. He was born on January 2, 1905.

The extraordinary youthfulness of appearance which Sir Michael Tippett retained into extreme old age, even when frailty overtook him and when eye problems had led to near-blindness, was a true reflection of his mind. To the end, he was a rare example of a composer whose sensibilities were alert to all generations and to many cultures.

Grammar School, before going to the Royal College of Music in 1923. Here he studied composition with Charles Wood (privately exploring Renaissance music and the English madrigalists), piano with Aubin



provided one of the most effective ingredients in A Child of Our Time. Cast as a Bachian oratorio to his own words (on the advice of T. S. Eliot), the work includes five Negro spirituals set like chorales in the structure; and this device, movingly handled, helped to draw listeners to the work.

ened self-awareness, between those confronting one another across gaps that are political and racial as well as marital. The music, which includes a large set-piece blues, is at once tauter than the first opera and more lyrical than *Priam*.

HALINA SZPIRO

Halina Szpiro, literary hostess and arts patron, died in London on January 2 aged 82. She was born in Warsaw on June 22, 1915.

manian border in a tank? "Don't be silly, darling. We used a tank because we couldn't get a car. At the Romanian border we used a much more potent weapon than a mere tank - charm!"



had behaved with considerable courage by returning to Poland to help her parents after the Nazi invasion she replied simply: "I wouldn't want to live if I found I couldn't live with myself."

nesses. In 1967 he went to see the Governor of the Bank of England, Sir Gordon Richardson, to seek a licence to turn his firm into a merchant bank.

ected with the arts. She had a marvellous eye for paintings, abstract, cautiously and fascinatingly.

ladies I lunch with are far too busy to lunch. But lunch they did with her. The wives of ambassadors to London, especially from the Middle East and Eastern Europe, would find themselves next to prominent businessmen, bankers and politicians.

MILESTONES



Frank Muir, CBE, writer and broadcaster, died on January 2 aged 77. He was born on February 20, 1920.

titles. In 1928 she won Wimbledon, the French championship, and her Wightman Cup matches without losing more than three games in any set.

After Trinity College, Cambridge, Frank Roberts joined the Foreign Service in 1930. When war broke out he was just 32, serving in the Foreign Office's Central Department in London.



He then served in Moscow, in Ernest Bevin's private office and in India before returning to London in 1951. He then became an ambassador, successively in Belgrade, at Nato in Brussels, in Moscow and in Bonn.

PERSONAL COLUMN

FOR SALE, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, GIFTS, FLATSHARE, TRUSTEE ACTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION, COURT & SOCIAL

After Trinity College, Cambridge, Frank Roberts joined the Foreign Service in 1930. When war broke out he was just 32, serving in the Foreign Office's Central Department in London.

Equities down across the board

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table of stock prices for various sectors including Alcoholic Beverages, Banks, Breweries, Pubs & Rest, Building & Construct, Building Materials, Chemicals, and Distributors.

Table of stock prices for the Engineering & Vehicles sector.

Table of stock prices for the Food Manufacturers sector.

Table of stock prices for the Healthcare sector.

Table of stock prices for the Household Goods sector.

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Table of stock prices for the Investment Trusts sector.

Table of stock prices for the Media sector.

Table of stock prices for the Retailers & Food sector.

Table of stock prices for the Leisure & Hotels sector.

Table of stock prices for the Mining sector.

Table of stock prices for the Oil & Gas sector.

Table of stock prices for the Other Financial sector.

Table of stock prices for the Retailers & General sector.

Table of stock prices for the Transport sector.

Table of stock prices for the Water sector.

Table of stock prices for the Alternative Inv Market sector.

Table of stock prices for the Pharmaceuticals sector.

Table of stock prices for the Printing & Paper sector.

Table of stock prices for the Property sector.

Table of stock prices for the Telecommunications sector.

Table of stock prices for the Textiles & Apparel sector.

Table of stock prices for the British Funds sector.

Table of stock prices for the Short-Term Bonds sector.

Table of stock prices for the Long-Term Bonds sector.

Table of stock prices for the Undated and Index-Linked sectors.

Large advertisement for Oppo Press Treas reval, featuring a man in a suit and the text 'WHS seeks for Water'.

Handwritten text in Arabic script at the bottom of the page.





# The art of management



COMMENTARY  
by our City Editor

The prospect of Gerry Robinson's imminent arrival at the Arts Council will presage a full-scale performance of fear and loathing from the Invies but it is also likely to highlight some schizophrenic attitudes in the City. Be prepared for an outcry from Granada investors appalled at their chairman taking on this new commitment. Even those prepared to accept that the jovial Irishman may be capable of combining the two roles will be demanding he take a salary cut.

Yet the perpetrators of these mean-spirited calls will most probably be the very same people who have so enthusiastically espoused the outpourings of the corporate governance industry. They have pored over the dreary pontifications on the ideal board structure and sanctimoniously declared the mavericks who still believe that they can be both chairman and chief executive. The know-alls of the investment world favour a neat division of the roles, and on most interpretations of the split, only one of the jobs needs to be full time.

Gerry Robinson most certainly shares this view. So famously dismissed by Basil Fawcett, aka John Cleese, as an "upstart caterer", Robinson has steered Granada to phenomenal success. But a major part of his achievement has been to have found a hugely capable chief executive and entrust him with making things work.

Robinson is the big picture man. He can have his ideas whether on a Donegal golf course or headed towards an Arts Council meeting. What those ideas might achieve if Charles Allan were not actually running the show is highly debatable, but as long as the partnership functions, shareholders should not wish to see their chairman tied to his desk and putting in a 50-hour week for his £857,000 salary.

The puritanical attitude to business still pervades much of Britain, where working hours are the longest in Europe. But it is ideas rather than mere man-hours which are the most valuable contribution to business in the very late twentieth century. Shareholders cannot claim that Mr Robinson's working pattern has prejudiced their investment. If he were to add the Arts Council to his portfolio there is no reason to suppose that it would have an adverse effect on Granada.

He might not have been an obvious candidate for the title of renaissance man, but industry needs leaders with broad interests. American investors did not complain when one of their most highly paid executives combined running food giant Heinz

with operating his own publishing empire based in Ireland. On the contrary, Tony O'Reilly was feted as a star.

If Robinson is prepared to take on the challenge of bringing order to the Arts Council, he should be encouraged. Investors only have reason to moan if he fails to look after their interests. Meanwhile, the contribution made by him, and other business bosses, should not be measured in mere man hours.

## Questions for Mr Robinson

Parliament's belated new year greeting for Geoffrey Robinson promises to be frenetic rather than cordial. If the Paymaster General answers questions on Thursday, he will be confronted with the seemingly impossible contradictions in his own position, damning tax shelters for any saver who has

managed to accumulate £50,000 while himself sheltering family millions where the Treasury cannot touch them.

The issue of the Treasury minister's own family tax arrangement is clearly not going to fade into the darkness of mid-winter, as new evidence emerges of further trusts and professional arrangements. The practices of Mr Robinson are so close to the practices that ministers condemn in all other even mildly affluent folk that the Cabinet will have to change tack on one or the other. Government cannot attack almost everyone's tax breaks except those of its richest members.

For savers and the financial services industry, however, Mr Robinson's competence as the Government's trusted financial expert is even more an issue than any contradictions in his personal position. Mr Robinson is firmly responsible for the Government's planned individual savings account, if only because

he touched it last. He launched it to a chorus of catcalls. Now the considered replies invited to his consultative paper confirm that the scheme is inferior in almost every way to the savings schemes it was supposed to "build on".

The great countervailing virtue of Isas was meant to be their appeal to people on modest incomes who do not save at all. Isas were to be simple, flexible and cheap. In reality, as Mr Robinson is now being told from nearly all sides, by some of our most respected financial institutions, this aim is certain to be frustrated. Unless the scheme is heavily redesigned, it will be complex and, because of that, expensive. It will also put new savers off with poor returns.

Appealing as may be to shelter several schemes under one umbrella, the complex rules that the Revenue wants to impose show that it is counter-productive. Insurance schemes and instant access do not go together. Mr

Robinson should decide urgently whether cash deposits are to be sheltered freely from tax on interest in Isas or not at all. The plan is illogical and won't work.

Perhaps such decisions should be left to a successor, one who can also acknowledge the blinding truth that saving £50,000 over a lifetime does not make you "very well off".

## Waterstone talks his books

Tim Waterstone seems set to become the latest beneficiary of the fact that venture capitalists have an awful lot of cash. Last year Advent International rounded up a cool billion dollars from investors and for the last few months it has been hunting for ways to spend it. Enabling Waterstone to join forces with EMI to buy the business he founded is just the sort of deal Advent had in mind.

The organisation is headquartered in Boston, but like so many US funds is now looking to Europe for investment opportunities. As another venture capitalist, BZW Private Equity, pointed out this week in its predictions for the new year, the

American houses, having saturated their own market are "over paid and over here".

These firms do not want to be trifling with the minor buyouts that are the bread and butter for organisations such as 3i. Along with the UK leaders such as CinVen, which has been particularly aggressive recently, and Cardover, they are big hitters. But the competition for these deals is now intense, forcing many of the firms to turn their attentions to continental Europe, and Germany in particular.

The Waterstone's deal, with a price tag of around £300 million, is chunky enough to be of interest to these cash-rich investors.

The only concern in this hugely competitive market to lend must be whether the deals become too expensive. Tim Waterstone can be a highly persuasive salesman, and not just of books.

## Spot on

WHILE PDFM may now have been subsumed into the Brinson empire, following the merger of its Swiss parent with a fellow Swiss bank, the fund manager does not appear to have changed its spots for the new year. Earlier this week, the most famous exponent of the value investment strategy was to be found adding to its stake in Booker. It now holds almost a quarter of the company's stock. Yesterday, Booker issued a profits warning.

# Booker share price affected by warning

By PAUL DURMAN

BOOKER, the food wholesaling group, faces "a crisis of credibility" after delivering the latest in a string of disappointments.

The company said yesterday that this year's pre-tax profits would be less than £80 million, far short of the £93 million consensus of City forecasts. It will maintain its dividend at 15.7p rather than paying the small increase that had been expected.

Booker's shares - strong this week because of a buy recommendation from Jonathan Leinster, of SBC Warburg - fell 20 per cent to 272½p.

Shareholders and analysts, who were treated to a series of upbeat visits to Booker's cash-and-carry operation last autumn, were strongly critical. Sally Jones, of Credit Lyonnais Laing, said: "This is incredibly bad. It's a crisis of credibility."

Some shareholders are starting to think about pressing for the replacement of Charles Bowen, who has been chief executive since 1993. One

said: "Ever since the acquisition of the Nurdin & Peacock business [in November 1986] there has been a stream of negative surprises. It leads one to question the competence and credibility of management."

Mr Bowen said he had always said that it would take several years to tackle Booker's problems, but added: "If we don't deliver this year, I certainly will be under pressure."

Booker blamed its poor pre-Christmas trading almost entirely on a less profitable mix of sales that stemmed from last month's rise in cigarette duty. The company believes the independent grocers that are its customers misjudged the extent to which smokers would stock up on cigarettes ahead of the change and were forced to restock in December.

This left them short of cash to buy food, a much more profitable business for Booker than cigarettes.

Times, page 31

## S&N likely to take £25m hit

By DOMINIC WALSH

SCOTTISH COURAGE, Scottish & Newcastle's brewing division, has lost the exclusive rights to supply the former Innternational pub estate acquired recently by Nomura International. The move is expected to knock about £25 million from S&N profits.

The Grand Pub Company, the vehicle set up by Nomura to hold the 4,300-strong Innternational and Spring Inns chains, announced yesterday that it had negotiated new supply contracts with a host of national brewers and drinks suppliers, including Whitbread, Guinness and Bulmer, to run alongside a new five-year contract with S&N.

It has also signed up regionals such as Greene King, Morland and Young's. On the plus side, Scottish Courage has won two new contracts covering the distribution of all beer, alcoholic and soft drinks to the Grand Pub estate, including those sourced from other brewers.

## Nike finance director steps down

By OLIVER AUGUST

ROBERT FALCONE yesterday resigned as the finance director of Nike in the face of mounting problems at the world's largest manufacturer of training shoes.

Last month, Nike announced a drop in earnings of 20 per cent instead of an anticipated increase of 10 per cent. The company said orders would continue to fall during 1998. Nike shares declined 30 per cent last year.

The company now acknowledges that fewer teenagers regard trainers as fashion items and are turning increasingly to hiking boots made by companies such as Timberland.

Thomas Clarke, Nike president, did not give any specific explanation for the departure, but said: "Bob has served Nike well during a period of unprecedented growth." Mr Falcone has yet to find a new job.

The profit decline was made worse by the economic problems in Asia.

## Sketchley shares soar as predator moves in

SHARES in Sketchley rose by more than 25 per cent yesterday after the dry cleaning group admitted it is being stalked by an unnamed predator (Adam Jones writes).

Sketchley told the stock market that shareholders have been approached "in recent days" by "a company yet to be incorporated", raising speculation that a group of private investors are pursuing a bid, probably with the backing of venture capital. The company's share price

divided last year when accounting irregularities contributed to a one-off charge of £9.9 million and an unexpected £4.3 million loss for the 1996-97 accounting year.

Sketchley said a tentative bid approach by the same party was rebuffed last September. HSBC, adviser to Sketchley, said the board was not convinced of the bidder's ability to fund an adequate cash bid. Sketchley said a second approach on December 22 was also rejected. The shares closed at 58p, up 12p.

Times, page 31

# THE SUNDAY TIMES

BRAINPOWER



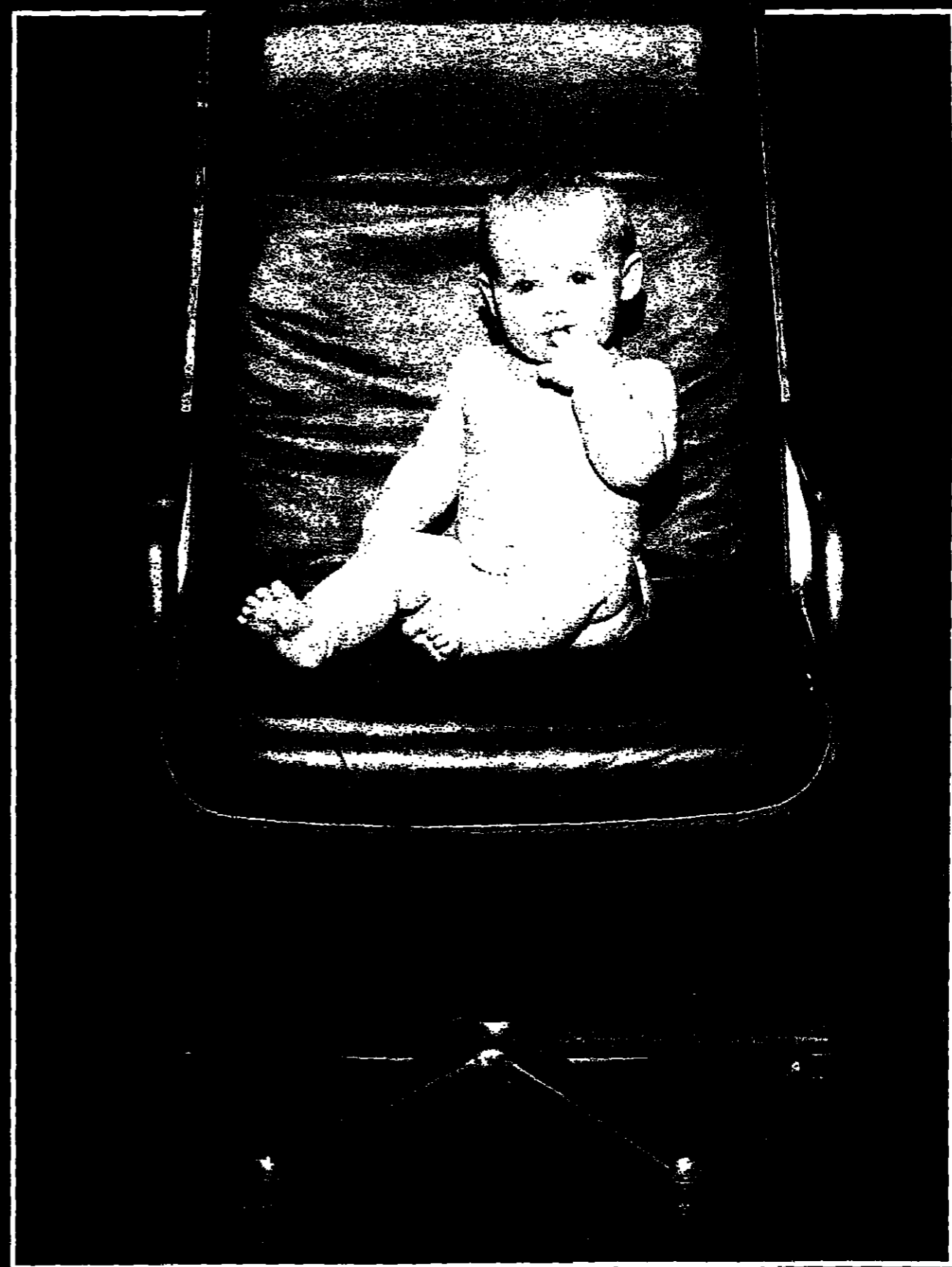
STYLE  
Hail Mary: why Mary Queen of Scots is the hot fashion inspiration



CULTURE  
Hollywood's new generation: Marky Mark unwraps in Boogie Nights



MAGAZINE  
Sigourney Weaver unravels in The Ice Storm



# MIND EXPANDING

Boost your creativity. Improve your memory. Help your children achieve more. Part One of BrainPower, an authoritative new six-part series, is FREE with The Sunday Times tomorrow

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Richard Miles learns how lenders can stay out of the frame

When banks brush with crooks who have theft off to a fine art

On the morning of September 1, 1993, undercover police officers arrested four men at Antwerp airport as they attempted to bring a number of stolen paintings into Belgium.



Police traced Goya's Doña Antonia Zdrate and Vermeer's Lady Writing a Letter with Her Maid to the vault of a Luxembourg bank.

Eighteen paintings were stolen in the 1986 raid on the Beits' home in the Irish Republic. It was masterminded by Martin "The General" Cahill, a gangster who was later shot dead in a Dublin street by the IRA.

John Emson, the register's managing director, is convinced that many of these missing pieces lurk in the vaults of banks across the world.

For example, he refuses to accept paintings, sculptures or antiquities as collateral unless the client has been with the bank for several years.

Also an important consideration, Courts usually asks the borrower to deposit the works in a secure environment. This serves two purposes: it protects objects from damage or theft and gives the bank access in the event of a default.

Client introductions are pivotal to transactions. Leopold Joseph, one of the smaller private banks in London, agreed to offer a loan against a spread of Old Masters to an art dealer.

John Emson, the register's managing director, is convinced that many of these missing pieces lurk in the vaults of banks across the world. One Japanese bank in possession of 1,000 paintings worth an estimated £1.4 billion recently approached the register in an effort to authenticate its collection.

The banks are, understandably, reticent about discussing their experiences in this field. In recent years most institutions, thanks to the strictures of the police, have strengthened their vetting procedures when lending against art as the prime security.

In London, two banks dominate this type of lending: Coutts, bankers to the Queen, and the private banking arm of Citibank, the US financial group.

Even when thieves are tracked down and arrested, they do not always end up behind bars. The Beit saga led to four people being convicted, including individuals with links to Irish paramilitaries.

Virgin MegaSavers advertisement featuring a woman's face and the price £268. Text includes 'SEAT BACK TV IN ECONOMY' and 'virgin atlantic'.

In London, two banks dominate this type of lending: Coutts, bankers to the Queen, and the private banking arm of Citibank, the US financial group.

The Beit saga led to four people being convicted, including individuals with links to Irish paramilitaries, but not the four men arrested at Antwerp airport: they were all acquitted on a technicality.

It is a common ground rule that the majority of banks follow when lending against a work of art. Courts, bankers to the Queen, and the private banking arm of Citibank, the US financial group.



Martin Cahill was the mastermind behind an art raid

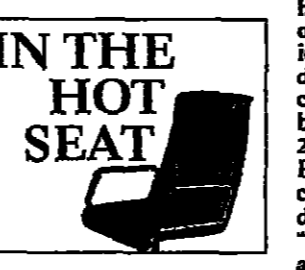
Rock'n'roller brings Max factor to Lloyd's

Exit Sir David Rowland, bound for academia, weighed down with plaintiffs and gifts. Enter Max Taylor, university dropout and avowed rock'n'roller, who took office this week as chairman of Lloyd's.

1998, filled with speaking and travel commitments. He intends to spend the coming weeks on a "walkabout", talking to as many people in the market as possible.

Taylor lives near Guildford, Surrey, with Dawn, his wife of 27 years, and drives himself in each morning, arriving before 7am. The couple have two children: Christian, 25, who is an aspiring actor, and Charlotte, 23, who is studying law.

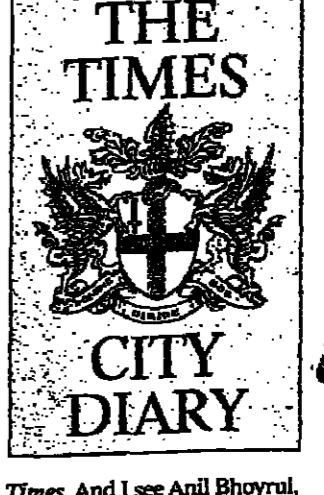
Jon Ashworth: Taylor addressing future needs



C.V. MAX TAYLOR: Born: March 17, 1948. Educated: Haileybury. 1970: Joined Willis Faber, starting as junior evasion broker.

Liffe change

THE London International Financial Futures Exchange is looking ahead to life without Jack Wigglesworth, whose three-year term as chairman of the buoyant derivatives exchange comes to an end in May.



But there are rumours that they might have to go outside for someone with the political nous to take the necessary hard decisions, such as scrapping some contracts or converting them to electronic trading only.

AS YOU will all be aware, the brother of Rowan Atkinson, the comic actor who created Mr Bean, once tried to have Douglas Hurd shot for treason.

Off-key

IN JULY I revealed the fact, unaccountably missing from his CV, that Max Taylor, the new chairman of Lloyd's, was once manager of Hawkwind, the heavy metal band.

Even when thieves are tracked down and arrested, they do not always end up behind bars. The Beit saga led to four people being convicted, including individuals with links to Irish paramilitaries, but not the four men arrested at Antwerp airport: they were all acquitted on a technicality.

Pink'un

NEWS from the Sunday Business, moving inexorably towards the February 15 launch date. The paper, being bankrolled by the Barclay Brothers, is going to be pink, in honour of the Financial

Times. And I see Anil Bhoyrul, the former editor before the paper collapsed, has written to Private Eye defending his reputation after a suggestion that he was attempting to clamber back on board.

YVE NEWBOLD, the ubiquitous former company secretary of Hanson, is joining Hedrick & Struggles, the headhunter, as senior partner advising companies on the appointment of chairmen and independent directors.



Rowan Atkinson: brother tried to have Hurd shot

Hankel, a Frankfurt economics professor. The right to economic stability is enshrined in the German constitution, and they claim the single currency will cost a packet.

Easy rider

AFTER being finance director of Laura Ashley, you probably need a break. Jim Walsh, who is leaving the financially challenged chintzy frock and furnishings group, plans to ride a Harley Davidson motorcycle across Australia.



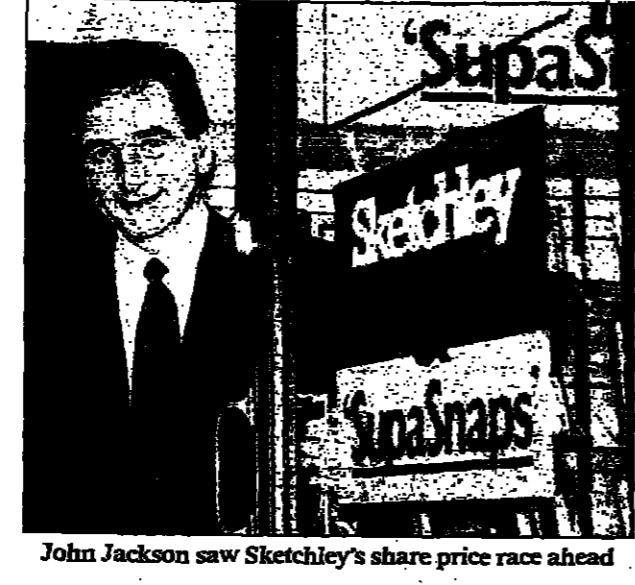
Max Taylor, the new chairman of Lloyd's, is addressing future needs. He is seen in a dark suit, gesturing as he speaks.

Handwritten Arabic text in a box: محمد بن الوليد

سكيتشي من أجل

GEC splashes out again for investor giveaway

MONEY talks and it is something GEC has always had plenty of. Yesterday it splashed out £77 million on buying back its own shares...



MICHAEL CLARK Stock Market Writer of the Year

Further worries about the sell-off in Asian markets and another opening fall on Wall Street left investors in London licking their wounds...

John Jackson saw Sketchey's share price race ahead. Mr Waterstone's book chain. Mr Waterstone founded the chain before selling it to WH Smith...

over by Hercules in the US may have some way to run. There was an early flurry of activity in Sketchey...

MAJOR INDICES table with columns for Location, Index Name, and Value. Includes New York (Dow Jones, S&P Composite), Tokyo, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Sydney, Frankfurt, Singapore, Brussels, Paris, Zurich, and London.

RECENT ISSUES table listing various companies and their share prices. Includes Abbey Nat Dublin, Autologic, BCD Technologies, etc.

RIGHTS ISSUES table listing companies and their share prices. Includes Calluna n/p, RIBES, Sketchey, etc.

MAJOR CHANGES table listing companies and their share price changes. Includes Sketchey, ISA Int'l, etc.

OTHER STERLING table listing companies and their share prices. Includes Argentina, Australia, etc.

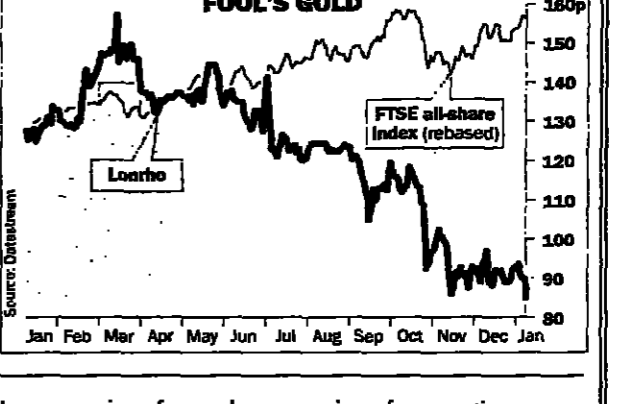
TEMPUS Chinese puzzle

INVESTORS like their banks big and dirty but will HSBC be sufficiently rough and tough in a Hong Kong slump?

Lonrho to JCI, which many suspect is really controlled by Anglo, so Lonrho made a bid approach to JCI.

Booker CRITICS who rage about Booker's literary prize should not hold their breath.

Series of accounting errors took their toll, and yesterday's sharp rise does not even take them to half that level.



MARKETS OF THE WEEK table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Arney, HSBC, etc.

ICIS-LOR table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Brent 15 Day, etc.

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Aluminium, etc.

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Long Gilt, etc.

MONEY RATES table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Base Rate, etc.

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Euro, etc.

DOLLAR RATES table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Australia, etc.

FTSE VOLUMES table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes 3M, etc.

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Currency, etc.

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Gold, etc.

WALL STREET table listing various market indices and their movements. Includes Amex, etc.

NEWS

Cook affair clouds Blair's trip

Revelations about Robin Cook's marriage overshadowed Tony Blair's visit to Japan...

Tax deadline 'should be extended'

Accountants believe the Inland Revenue has mishandled the introduction of the self-assessment tax regime...

Diana garden doubts

Residents say that plans for a £10 million garden of remembrance for Diana, Princess of Wales...

Scottish parliament

The headquarters of a brewery firm next to the Queen's residence in Edinburgh is to be the site of the first parliament in Scotland for almost 300 years...

Gamble pays off

Mo Mowlam's gamble in meeting prisoners in the Maze appeared to have paid off after one terrorist group dropped its opposition to the peace talks...

Computer Pill doubt

The handheld computer marketed as the biggest breakthrough in contraception since the Pill was branded as unsuitable for couples who do not want a baby...

Muslim schools

Muslims win a decade-long battle to be allowed their own state schools...

Blair's 'monty'

Tony Blair delivered a warning to critics in his own party that he would go the 'full monty' in modernising Britain...

Artistic crisis

Art school training in Britain is so dire that Madame Tussaud's has been forced to go to Azerbaijan for artists who can sculpt...

Indonesia scare

Reports say that only 22 of the 282 companies listed on the Jakarta stock exchange are financially viable...

Sex killer

Robert Oliver, the child sex killer who has spent 12 weeks hiding in a police cell has agreed to go to a secure mental hospital...

Money laundering

Russian crime syndicates are now laundering money on a grand scale in London...

Labour feuds over Brown biography

A fresh bout of feuding among Labour politicians erupted with the publication of the biography of Gordon Brown, extracted from which are serialised in The Times...



Red Daniel, a £25,000 racing pigeon stolen from his loft in Essex three months ago, was safe at home yesterday after appearing on his owner's roof.

NEWS FEATURES

Forgotten: There will be no proud descendants to honour Frank King and George Anderson when they are buried in France 81 years after their deaths in the First World War...

OPINION

Miracle or mirage: If growth begins to stall as a result of the events in Asia, reductions in interest rates in Britain, America and Europe, should be on the cards...

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: I have been in Argentina pondering the anniversary of the Falklands war and ending up in a tango club. They have much in common...

BUSINESS

Waterstones: WH Smith is hoping to receive £300 million for the chain that it is likely to sell to Tim Waterstone and EMI...

SPORT

Football: The FA turned down Newcastle's request to move their St James' Park stadium...

LETTERS

Self assessment: Diana garden; Robin Cook; Gascoigne; police and media...

OBITUARIES

Sir Michael Tippett, composer; Halina Szapiro, literary hostess...

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,685

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-29.

- ACROSS: 1. Adjourner for some wine (4). 2. Academic stream is beside itself (4). 3. Add a little terse advice to convertible driver in rain? (5,2). 4. Red nose, perhaps, that Continental got in fight (7). 5. (For course) Q: Where did Charles hide after Worcester? (7). 6. Approval given by merry socialist in speech (4,5). 7. Verse of Abide with Me, say, cut short in divinity lesson (5). 8. Scholar took exam, securing first place (6). 9. Conductor's turn with part of the orchestra (8). 10. Shot in two parts of body (8). 11. Break in bay (6). 12. Shortly about to run off without paying for this orange (5). 13. Alert goalkeeper may dive thus (5,4). 14. Filled with enthusiasm, return to log support (7). 15. One holds one's breath - it may go up (7). 16. Spencer jacket ultimately distinctive in style (5). 17. Reduce intake for legislative assembly (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,679 and Solution to Puzzle No 20,684.

INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions. UK Weather: All regions 0336 444 910. UK Roads - All regions 0336 401 410.

Weather by Fax

Dial 0336 followed by area number from your fax. UK Country 416 836. N. Ireland 416 841. Wales 416 842.

World City Weather

153 destinations world wide. By phone dial 0336 413216. By fax (over page) 0336 416333.

Car reports by fax

New and used car reports from the AA. Dial from your fax handset, you may have to set up poll receive mode.

HOURS OF DARKNESS

Table showing hours of darkness for today and tomorrow across various UK locations.

HIGH TIDES

Table showing high tide times for various UK locations.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest day temp: Brighton, 21°C. Lowest day temp: London, 12°C. Highest night temp: London, 8°C. Lowest night temp: London, 4°C.

FORECAST

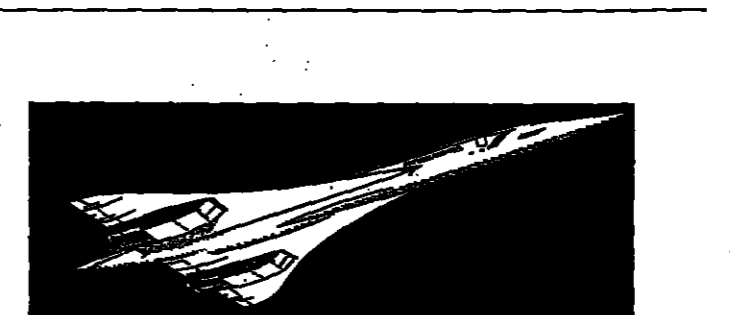
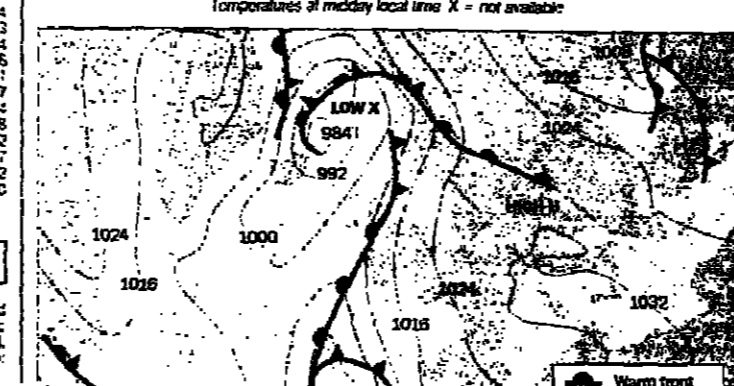
General: Northern Ireland and northern Scotland will have rain at first but this will become confined to northwest Scotland. Eastern Scotland will have a mostly dry day with some bright periods...

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Table showing weather conditions around Britain yesterday, including temperature, wind, and cloud cover for various locations.

ABROAD

Table showing weather forecasts for various international locations.



Advertisement for Concorde and Oriana & Orient-Express cruises, including details on routes, dates, and prices.

Advertisement for Allies insurance, featuring a large image of a person's face.



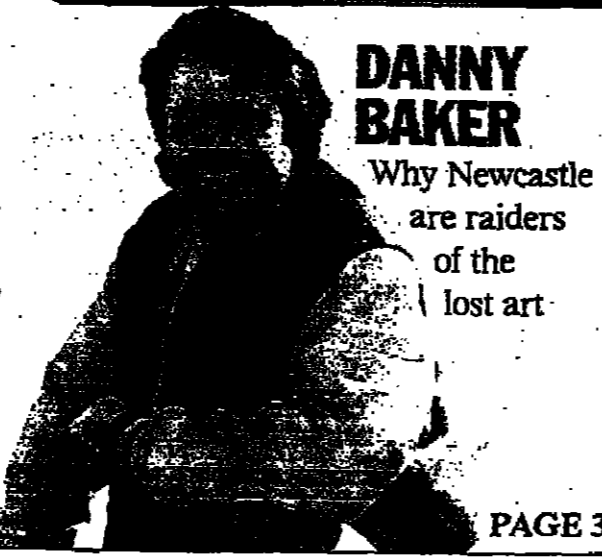
UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT



CHINA CRISIS

What now in swimming's doping scandal?

PAGE 34



DANNY BAKER

Why Newcastle are raiders of the lost art

PAGE 35



CAPTAINS PAST AND PRESENT

Carling calls it a day

PAGE 41

PLUS

Lawrence Dallaglio PAGE 40



WEEKEND MONEY

Sums and lovers: financial facts of living together PAGE 64



go

How to beat the perils of winter driving PAGE 47

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JANUARY 10 1998

FRIENDS AND RIVALS COME FACE TO FACE AT OLD TRAFFORD



Klinsmann, left, and Sheringham will put their mutual admiration to one side when Tottenham play Manchester United today. Photographs: Marc Aspland and Paul Cousans

Graham keeps closed shop

There are two clichés in football that I warm to. "Setting the stall out," is one. "Shutting up shop," is the other. Such humdrum high-street imagery works very well for me, somehow. It divides football into teams that hawk their trumpery to passing trade ("Come on Missus, look at this lovely Di Canio, you won't find this in Marks") and those that take your breath away by closing for business, with a firm "ker-ching", the moment business is done.

George Graham, dapper manager of Leeds United, has a many-faceted reputation, but it's the image of him bolting the door from the inside that strikes home. He's 40 up, he looks at his watch. He sighs, walks to the door, turns the "Closed" sign and then, as an additional precaution, erects a barricade with a pile of heavy furniture. It may be 3.10pm. There may not even be a goal in hand. He doesn't care. Re-

LYNNE TRUSS

regardless of public clamouring, he polishes his nails, puts his feet up and counts his points before placing them in the safe. "But this is boring and joyless," his restive customers outside object. "Why can't we have some Di Canio like those people?" He ignores them. He is the Christopher Walken of football. Focused? If he were any more focused, he'd be burning holes in the carpet.

But the funny thing is, fans like him. His ability to get results just wins them over. Today, Leeds play Arsenal at Highbury and it's a good thing that Arsène Wenger is such a mature and intelligent chap, as the Highbury crowd evidently still adores George Graham and is likely to demonstrate the fact. Despite all those awful years of seeing lovely, innocent football matches brutally strangled at birth, they remember the umpteen trophies he brought home and — well, they forgive.

Of late, people have noticed a softening in Gorgeous George. After his year in the wilderness (the bung scandal), he started to smile on television, which frightened the kiddies. Little Red Riding Hood came horribly to mind. Did this mean Graham might lighten up as a football manager? It was hard to tell. Continued on page 34, col 1

Allies prepare to do battle

Strikers with common goals and a shared past meet today. Matt Dickinson reports

TEDDY Sheringham is into Ferraris, Jürgen Klinsmann prefers the Volkswagen Beetle. Sheringham has a penchant for Page Three girls, Klinsmann does not. One you may find in Essex's finer nightspots, the other sipping espresso in a Hampstead café. On the surface, the England striker and his German counterpart appear to have even less in common than the two clubs that they will represent at Old Trafford today, Sheringham's Manchester United juggernaut crushing every team that gets in their way, Klinsmann's Tottenham Hotspur in need of running repairs as they stutter from one crisis to the next.

Yet, briefly before today's seemingly lop-sided fixture — and as they have done regularly on the telephone since the German's departure — the two strikers will share a moment to reminisce on a partnership that was one of the most prolific of modern times. They shared 53 goals for Tottenham — 29 for Klinsmann — in that memorable 1994-95 season. For the German captain, though, their partnership was much more than a through-ball here or a knock-down there. "Teddy is not only a great player," Klinsmann said, "but a great person. He looked after me for the first couple of weeks, along with Gary Mabbutt, and it made it



Striking a pose together in 1994. Photograph: Ross Kinnaird

so easy to adapt to England. It was his idea for the diving celebrations. We have a similar mentality. He is a very open-minded person and so we had a great relationship on and off the pitch." Klinsmann has played alongside some of the world's most feared strikers in a career that has taken

him from Monaco to Milan to Munich. Few, though, rate higher than Sheringham and that makes it all the more remarkable to the German that his former colleague has barely an honour to his name, bar promotion with Millwall from the old second division. Klinsmann's travels have yielded

a glorious bounty of World Cup, European Championship, Uefa Cup and Bundesliga medals, but he knows that Sheringham, even at 31, may soon be playing catch-up.

"He has made himself a name everywhere on the Continent now," Klinsmann said. In Italy, in Spain, everywhere they know who Teddy Sheringham is. For me, it was such fun playing alongside him. We had a blind understanding. He always knew where I was and I knew where he was."

A first-hand view of the FA Carling Premiership leaders today will surely convince Klinsmann that Sheringham's medals, if not yet guaranteed, are at least in the post. After a slow start, Sheringham has become an integral part of the continuing success story at Old Trafford, but he has not lost his admiration for his former Tottenham ally.

"At the end of my career, I will be proud to say I played alongside Jürgen Klinsmann," he said. "I am not saying he is the best I have played with, because there are some at United I could compare him to, but it was an amazing season because of the aura that surrounded him."

"He was a World Cup-winner and he came with the reputation of being a bit of a diver. But his clinical finishing and enthusiasm were his great assets and it was great to be involved. There were games when he would not do a lot, but that half-chance presented itself and he would score. My message to our defenders is don't even give him a half-chance."

Stevenage delight, page 34  
Bergkamp's dream, page 37  
Leboeuf keeps cool, page 38  
Match previews, page 39



Twin Airbags

0.69 in 9.3 seconds

On-board Compass

SWIMMING

Chinese in display of defiance over drugs

FROM CRAIG LORD IN PERTH

YUAN YUAN, the Chinese swimmer found with illegal muscle-building growth hormones in her luggage at Sydney airport on Thursday...

regarded as a violation of Fina rule DC9.1, which deals with trafficking in banned substances...



Shi Tianshu: unbowed

erming body for swimming, said an investigation was also possible into three other swimmers...

He was asked if he meant doping and whether growth hormone was readily available in China...



Pabari, who beat Rotheroe, the holder, by 3 and 2, studies the flight of an iron approach during his victory at Rye

Benign conditions play their part in Rotheroe's undoing

BY JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT

TO WIN 15 successive matches is some sort of record in the recent history of the President's Putter and Charlie Rotheroe...

the day wore on, the less penal the course became until it ended, as such a day should, with the sun slipping behind the River Rother and lighting up the sky...

couple of months of competitive practice, was inspired by the sight of the Kenyan flag flying over the old tram station near the harbour master's house...

the 15th, playing his second shot from some way to the right of the 18th green. The Rotheroe and Pabari match would have graced the final...

DETAILS

THIRD ROUND: S D Ellis (C Pembroke) 11; P Youngman (O Bosworth) 5 and 4; W H Barclay (C St John's) 11; D C Mearcher (C Foston) 4 and 2; P M Guez (C Denton) 11; J M Gordon (C Magdalen) 2 and 1; A C L Wong (O St Hugh's) 11; C Campbell-Gay (C St Catherine) 11; J H Randal (C St John's) 11; R W Dyer (O Woodham) 3 and 2; J S Young (O Chesham) 11; C H Chisholm (C Jesuit) 11; M S P Stevia (O Lady Margaret Hall) 11; C L A Edgington (O Pembroke) 7 and 6; J J Coleman (O St Catherine) 11; R C Howson (O Westcott) 11; R D Manser (O St Anne's) 11; F Palmer (C St John's) 2 and 1; Rev M J J Bonney (C St Catherine) 11; M Cooper (C Clare) 3 and 2; P J R Webb (C Trevo Hall) 11; D Wilson (C Magdalen) 3 and 2; N J Burke (O Lady Margaret Hall); W H P Jackson (O St Peter) 2 and 1; J H T Warren (C Selwyn) 11; P Dawson (O Gosport) 3 and 2; M Henderson (O Pembroke); C J Dale (C Trevo Hall) 3 and 2; J B Dyer (O St John's) 11; S M Birch (C Okehampton) 1 hole; J R Sanders (O Bursledon) 11; J Firth (C Gosport) 11; C G Nevill (C Gosport) 11; M F Azevedo (O Trevo Hall) 2 and 1; Randal (O Trevo Hall) 11; R S Davies (C Foston) 11; J R Palfrey (C Magdalen) 11; J G Cox (O St Edmund Hall) 5 and 4; G M Larpford (O Pembroke) 11

S P R Jenkins (O Worcester) 3 and 2; M Cox (C Green) 11; A R Powell (C Gosport) 3 and 2; M R A Holt (O Kettle) 11; W D Moore (C Denton) 11; N J Grant (C Chert) 11; R F H Petch (O Magdalen) 1 hole; M M Williams (C Foston) 11; A D Swanson (C Pembroke) 7 and 6; P J Hill (O Easter) 11; B G Stevener (O St Edmund Hall) 3 and 2; A G Edmond (C Trevo Hall) 11; B R Young (O Jesuit) 1 hole; N A Thayer (C Peterborough) 11; S J Smart (O Merton) 11; R A Saunders (O Merton) 11; W J Duggdale (O Jesuit) 1 hole; N A Thayer (C Peterborough) 11; A C Hodson (O St Peter) 11; A P Stacey (C Foston) 11; J E B Stubbs (O St John's) 1 hole; M Paine (O Queens) 11; C J Rotheroe (O Kettle) 3 and 2; C J Weight (C Jesuit) 11; R C P Seddon (O One) 5 and 4

TENNIS

Henman under pressure

HIGH winds, low temperatures and a day of sporadic but heavy rain — the Qatar Mobil Open in Doha has it all (Alix Ramsay writes). Yet it is not the best preparation for the heat of Australia, the next stop on the ATP Tour.

als realised that at sunset everyone, from spectators to line judges, would leave for Qatar, their first food of the day. With the quarter-finals washed out yesterday, the backlog of matches will be played today with the hope that the semi-finals can be played on schedule in the evening.

particularly well and Henman, who faces Petr Korda, the No 3 seed and one of the most talented players around, knows he will have to raise his game.

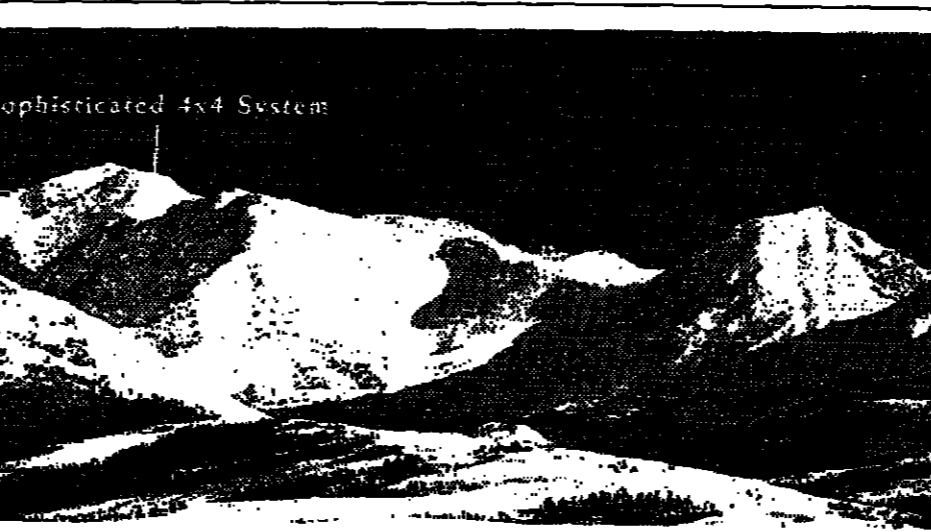
Graham counts out change

Continued from page 33 imagine. "Do what feels best at the time," he would urge his team. "Each of you is a hero in his heart. Show us that hero! And loosen up, you back four! You're not joined at the hip, you scallywags!"

LYNNE TRUSS

bushing at his expense. On arrival at Leeds, he promptly ejected all the players big enough to fight back filled their places with eager nobodies and rechristened the result "the playing staff".

biguous thrill of having their shop barricaded shut half the time but a big pile of points out back. Nobody paints the Mephistophelean alternatives as starkly as George Graham.



Sophisticated 4x4 System

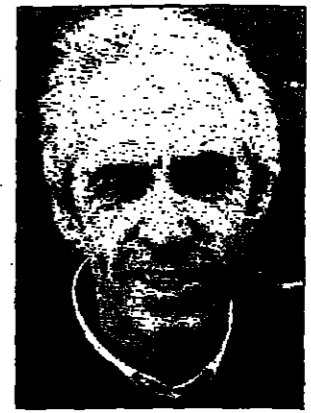
FOOTBALL

Stevenage win right to enjoy home comforts

By JOHN GOODBODY

THE Hertfordshire town of Stevenage will have its day in the spotlight of the FA Cup. A Football Association appeal board yesterday turned down a request by Newcastle United to move their fourth-round tie with Stevenage Borough on January 25 to St James' Park.

ground's capacity that must be allocated to away supporters. Green said he was "delighted" with the decision. "We can look forward to perhaps the greatest occasion in the history of Stevenage Football Club."



Fairclough: happy

The issue had escalated into a row between Newcastle and the Vauxhall Conference club, whose chairman, Victor Green, accused the FA Cup Premier League club of "Big Brother" tactics. There must, however, be some sympathy for Kenny Dalglish, the Newcastle manager, who was with Liverpool at the time of the Heysel and Hillsborough stadium tragedies and was vocal in his dismay at having to play the match at Stevenage.

Way." Ticket prices will be settled next week, but, I understand, most seats cost around £20. Paul Fairclough, the Stevenage manager, spoke of his admiration for Dalglish. "He has shown genuine concern about the safety. He has been through two horrific occasions and he wanted assurances that nothing like that was going to be repeated."

SPORT IN BRIEF

Sailor's move to Wigan blocked by Brisbane

■ RUGBY LEAGUE: Three days after Wigan Warriors hailed Wendell Sailor, the Brisbane Broncos and Australia wing, as the "biggest signing in rugby league history", his club insisted that the 23-year-old player would be remaining with them until 2000 (Christopher Irvine writes).

South Africa hold their nerve

■ CRICKET: Gary Kirsten, the opening batsman, who scored 103, and Allan Donald, who took four for 43, steered South Africa to a tense victory over New Zealand in their one-day international at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday.

Report under scrutiny

■ SNOOKER: A report on expense claims and internal payments within the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) under its previous administration was lodged with the Director of Public Prosecutions yesterday. The document has been sent to the DPP by Gerry Sinclair, a Glasgow solicitor, acting on behalf of Mark Wildman and Jim Chambers, two WPBSA directors.

Bell bows to youth again

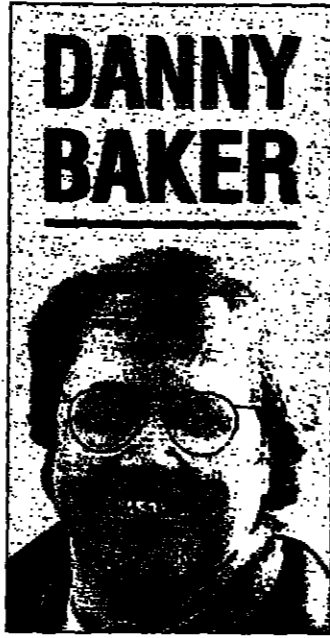
■ SKIING: For the second successive year, Graham Bell, the former No 1-ranked British downhill skier, was relegated to third place among British competitors by improving youngsters in both of the downhill races run on the first day of the British Land national championships in Tignes, France, yesterday. Bell was beaten by Andrew Freshwater, 24, who retained his British downhill title, and Finlay Mickel in an international field. The event was won by Claude Cretier, of France.

Advertisement for a car with text: 'Shortage What about... No get... clause... Moldov... contract...'

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Shortage of thrills? What about frills?

The Newcastle United v Liverpool game in the Coca-Cola Cup was a horrible experience. Like two former boxing champs, they lumbered and puffed their way through 12 rounds on the come-back trail to nowhere in front of a silent St James' Park full house too in love to walk away, too compassionate to egg them on cruelly.



1st Old Buffer in Stand: I say sir, some of these players are damned attractive. Shame they're not allowed to move.

(He consults the programme.) 2nd Buffer: I think this is either Study Of A Free Kick or Midfield Man Up For A Corner.



John wears black woollen gloves delicately matching his kit door in the Midlands, under his own brand-name, as a friend has since assured me.



Keith sports elegant white tights to ward off chills ways to ginger-up the fusty old traditional football kit.

Spare us all from more plucky underdogs

OTHER than the accepted mind-numbing clichés in football commentary — "good technique", "no easy matches any more", etc. — one phrase is always brilled at us: "plucky underdogs". I hate plucky underdogs.

IS FISHING the most popular sport in the country? If you took an immense football pitch with Those Who Play Football versus Those Who Fish, I'm sure the sheer weight of numbers would see to it that Football was three up by half-time.

The winner and the worm insist that he produce an equal amount of endorsements for Mr Rusedski, or else have a thundering good reason why not. If he refuses to meet them, they intend to mail him four-day-old fish for the rest of his tenure.

plug directly into the mains. This regrettable malady — part Tourette syndrome, part St Vitus's dance and part the Resurrection Shuffle — could be politely and charitably ignored... unless Bernard was serving you up a pint of maggots from the metal mug.

Ref who must be cornered

CAN I be the only one who wants to make a scapegoat out of Mr Dunn, the referee who blew while the corner was on its way across? We need to haul him on live television where he must wear a huge dunce's hat.

No get-out clause in Moldovan's contract

COVENTRY CITY have refused to insert a clause into the contract of Viorel Moldovan, their Romanian striker, who could make his debut against Chelsea today, which could have brought them a handsome profit immediately after the World Cup (Richard Hobson writes).

Keith Pike on the winners and losers in a league without overseas players Drastic effects of cut in foreign aid

TIME was when a foreigner in English football was regarded as someone bought in from Cardiff or Edinburgh, not Costa Rica or Estonia; when the continental drift was the subject of a geography lesson, not pre-match discussions in stadiums around the country as the influx of talent from all corners of the globe continues to transform the FA Cup Premiership into a playground for the rich and famous.

Association suddenly went to war with Brussels, declared independence, banned all but British and Irish players and decided to discount all goals scored by "foreigners". Who would be the winners and losers if, for example, the goals scored by Di Matteo for Chelsea were expunged but those by D. Matteo for Liverpool were allowed to stand?

Hignett happy to claim his reward

THERE is never a dull moment at Middlesbrough. Whether it is the latest tale of one of their leading players wanting out, or the most recent rumour linking Carlton Kirkball to the Riverside Stadium, the Nationwide League first division leaders are always in the headlines.

Table with columns: P, W, D, L, F, A, W, D, L, F, A, Pts, GD. Lists football clubs and their statistics.

Advertisement for a car with features: Cigar Lighter, 4 Litre Petrol or 2.5 Litre Turbo Diesel Engine, Air Conditioning.

# FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Mark Hodgkinson meets a pop musician belatedly charting success like his local team

## Banging the drum for born-again Barnsley

The Beach Boys, the Monkees and Aretha Franklin are among the phalanx of pop legends on an album that forms the musical accompaniment to some serious cutting of the rug.

Tucked in between Rod Stewart and the Spice Girls on the succinctly titled CD, *The Best Party Album In The World ... Ever*, is the Yorkshire band, Chumbawamba, with *Tubthumping*. If it seems a mite unlikely, the band's drummer, Harry Hamer, feels the same when he looks at the FA Carling Premiership table. "Just to see Barnsley up there, playing teams like Manchester United, I still can't believe it," Hamer, a lifelong Barnsley supporter, explained.

Chumbawamba are the Barnsley of the music scene. During their 16-year, nine-album career, they have been hitherto perceived as unfash-



Band on a run: Hamer's love of his home-town club, Barnsley, is never far away as he scales the heights after 16 years of endeavour with Chumbawamba. Photograph: Justin Slee/Guzelian

**LIFE AT THE TOP**

ionable, grouchy northerners; rugged journeymen, rather than silky playmakers. The boys (and three girls) done well, though. *Tubthumping* has sold more than 750,000 copies in the United Kingdom alone and their latest album has nestled in the top ten in the United States for several weeks, selling two million copies in the process. In football terms, this is a 2-0 win at Old Trafford with United praying for the final whistle. The qualities that have taken Barnsley to the Premiership are also distilled in Chumbawamba, who still boast six members from their original line-up. "We've never had money thrown at us. We've got to where we are because we have worked hard and had a belief in ourselves. We've always worked as a team," Hamer said. Although he co-wrote *Tubthumping*, Hamer did not realise until afterwards that

they had recorded the ultimate Barnsley theme tune. "The lyrics could have been written specially for us," John Hendrie, the Barnsley striker, said. "They sing, 'O Danny Boy, I get knocked down, but I get up again, you're never going to keep me down'." Although Leeds United have adopted it as their official theme song, it is played regularly in the Oakwell dressing-room. A hectic touring schedule has meant that Hamer has missed many Barnsley matches in recent years. On the day

that promotion was sealed, he was listening to the radio on headphones while the band sound-checked for a concert in Ipswich. "I was jumping up and down when I heard the score. I was really happy and I pulled on my Barnsley shirt for our encore," he said. He was first taken to Oakwell by his grandfather, Wilkinson Feamley, a Barnsley devotee, in 1971, when Barnsley were in the old fourth division. "I remember the noise and the ground looked really big, though it's not really. I was there with a

silk scarf around my wrist, a denim jacket, the lot." He lived in the Barnsley district of Kendray and, later, Ardsley, and supporting Barnsley seemed an integral part of the local culture. Sometimes, such was his enthusiasm, he would arrive at the ground before the car-park attendants. "There was a real routine to the weekend. You'd go to the Casa Disco record shop in town and buy a single on Saturday morning and then go to the match in the afternoon. On Sundays you'd go to

your gran's for your dinner. I hate all this where all the young kids support Manchester United. It means so much more when it's your local club," he said. Chumbawamba had an extraordinary year in 1997. It began when their record company rejected tapes of their forthcoming album and advised them to take a year off. The band decided to swap labels and sign to EMI. After years of struggle, they were suddenly elevated to the status of household name. In America, they appeared on the

David Letterman show, while in the UK they played the coveted New Year's Eve midnight spot on Channel 4's *TFI Friday*. There was tangible, home-spun proof of Chumbawamba's new standing when Harry's father, Jimmy Hamer, started to perform *Tubthumping* as part of the cabaret act that he takes to all parts of Yorkshire under the stage name of Jimmy Echo. "My dad also makes backing tapes for other singers and *Tubthumping* is his most popular of all time. I think *Lady in*

*Red* is second and *Simply the Best* third. My parents weren't into me getting into music at first; it's weird how it's all turned out," he said. Hamer has bet money on Barnsley surviving in the Premiership, though he is philosophical about the prospects of relegation. "I know that we're struggling, but we're there and if we go back down again, who cares? We've been in the Premier League. It's something my grandad would never have dreamt of. It's the same with the music, it was our year in 1997, but you don't

know what's going to happen next," he said. Despite the new-found fame, the money due in royalties has not yet filtered through to the group, who still pay themselves £160 a week in wages and live in modest houses in Leeds. By all accounts, the royalties will be vast, not that Hamer plans to spend it heedlessly. Might he direct some of it towards his beloved Barnsley? "Aye, I suppose we could sponsor the match ball or something, couldn't we?" he replied. And some.

## Insurance policy with costly penalty clause

The turnover turned over? It looked a little like that when Chelsea were thrashed by Manchester United last Sunday. The turnover (they use the English word) is the Italian expression for those rich clubs who buy more players than they can ever use at any given time, and alternate them. Chelsea are in that category and last Sunday it undid them. When Ruud Gullit, at the start of the season, added the young Norway striker, Tore Andre Flo, to a roster of attack that included Mark Hughes, Gianfranco Zola, and the famously underplayed Gianluca Vialli it looked as if he might be over-egging the pudding. Gullit protested he was doing nothing of the sort: the demands made on leading clubs these days necessitated strength in depth. But what happened last Sunday? With all four strikers available, Gullit rashly decided to play Mark Hughes in midfield where he was neither fish nor fowl.

In attack, no Vialli. Instead, Gianfranco Zola who hates playing anywhere but in the firing line, was partnered by the lanky Flo, a player who can sometimes look devastating, sometimes gauche. On Sunday, it was the latter. It took Gullit all of an hour to pull Flo off and put Vialli on, but the game was lost, even if Vialli snapp'd up a couple of goals. On previous occasions, he had scored four away to Barnsley, two vital late goals in the snow at Tromsø, and another three when the Norwegian team came to Stamford Bridge. His public utterances this season have been diplomatic. It has seemed, by and large, to be peace in our time. Gullit has paid him tribute, explaining that this season, unlike the last, Vialli has been free from injury. But the fact remains that at this late stage of the game's salient figures still spends most of his time on the bench. As Alan Hansen



has observed on *Match of the Day*, it is hardly the ideal way to treat a player of Vialli's age. The whole phenomenon of the turnover has been exacerbated by the Bosman decision. That Jean-Marc Bosman should

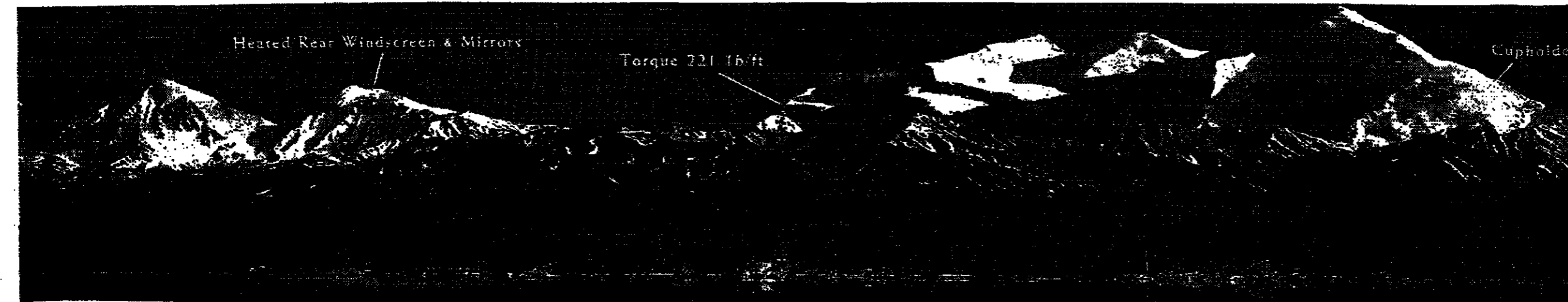
strike a blow for freedom of footballers was laudable enough. Quite why so marginal a player should also bring about total freedom for clubs to play as many EU footballers as they wish was a little mysterious. But certainly it opened the floodgates, putting an end to Uefa's carefully and sensibly maintained limitation on foreign EU players in any given team, three tending to be the maximum. Previously in Italy, "surplus" EU foreigners could not even sit on the bench; they had to watch games from the stand. But after Bosman, the deluge. AC Milan, you might say, have been one of the chief offenders, both before and after Bosman. Players such as Dejan Savicevic, the Yugoslav attacker, Florian Raducioiu, of Romania, Jean-Pierre Papin, of France, and Denmark's Brian Laudrup, whom everyone seems to want, have been marginalised. Savicevic, who scored in

the 5-0 rout of Internazionale on Thursday, is still at AC Milan, but loud and bitter were his complaints when for long periods he was kept out of the team, saved only by the support of the club's president, Silvio Berlusconi. Papin was equally bitter and outspoken. Inter have just reluctantly sold their city rivals their fine opportunist, Maurizio Ganz, who for several seasons past has been in and out of Inter's attack, scorer of important goals but never a regular first-teamer. If Chelsea now have an embarrassment of riches in attack, what of Inter? Two South American internationals cannot find a place. Before last Sunday's victory over Juventus, Ivan Zamorano, of Chile, was pleading to play, urging Gigi Simoni, the manager, to use three strikers, not just Ronaldo and Youri Djorkaeff. But neither Zamorano nor Uruguay's Recoba was picked. One

hopes the same sort of thing will not happen to another Uruguayan striker, Marcelo Zalayeta, who has joined Juventus. Proponents of the turnover have a point when they talk about endless profusion of fixtures and the consequent demands. Tottenham would fervently agree. After their FA Cup victory against Fulham, they were left with no fewer than 13 casualties. Andy Hincliffe has at least fallen out before he could be signed. Can Nicola Bertini stay fit? The auguries are not good. Once among Italy's most brilliant young talents, Bertini's career has been badly damaged by injuries. Meanwhile, Bulgaria's Hristo Stoichkov remains on Barcelona's bench while Real Madrid have just added to their squad two vastly expensive Brazilian strikers, Savio and Fabbri, plus the France international, Karembou. As Groucho Marx might have said: "I've heard of turnovers, but this is ridiculous."

## Chesham point the way for Newcastle

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL BY WALTER GAMMIE  
CHESHAM UNITED today head to Broadhall Way. Next in line to visit Stevenage Borough came Halifax Town, Hereford United ... and Newcastle United. The Ryman League club is approaching with confidence the first round of the FA Umbro Trophy against the Vauxhall Conference club that reached the semi-finals last season. David Pembroke, the Chesham chairman, said: "We're doing very well. We beat Sutton United in the last round, and they're top of the Ryman League. We're sixth from bottom, but we have played all the top sides and have a run of home fixtures to come." Having won the first division title by beating Basingstoke Town on the last day of the season, Chesham have changed their manager, Steve Emmanuel taking over from Andy Thomas, as they settle back in the premier division, a league they won in 1993 — a year before Stevenage. A young side, Chesham's key asset is Youness Nabil, a Morocco international, and flying left-winger. "He's a flair player," Pembroke said. "He's either brilliant or he's rubbish." Pembroke, who has been chairman for four years, said Chesham's ambition was to be in the Conference in three years' time. They model their youth structure, embracing 400 youngsters, on Stevenage, and regularly seek advice from Paul Fairclough, the manager. "He is superb," Pembroke said. "And we can't wait to get up there and congratulate them personally on their FA Cup success." The other non-League FA Cup survivors are also in Trophy action against Ryman League opposition. Cheltenham Town visit Enfield, who last month appointed Gary Calder as their manager, and Hereford United entertain Dulwich Hamlet, where Dave Garland has taken over from John Ryan and Mick Browne.



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kill the  
brings  
fantasy  
football  
to life

Keeping mum over  
Santa's surprise

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Skill that brings fantasy football to life

Dennis Bergkamp lives the dream that burns bright in every child.

Photograph by Marc Aspland



Bergkamp's aristocratic bearing is reflected in his authority on the pitch where he has shown a new generation of English players how beautiful the game can be

Behind the eyes of ice blue, the high, haughty cheekbones and the meticulous, fastidious manner, a dreamer lurks in Dennis Bergkamp. He has dreamt his dreams since before the days his parents brought him as a child from Amsterdam to Hastings and to Cornwall for family holidays and watched as he made a bee-line for the nearest sports shop so he could buy another football kit. His dreams stayed with him through adolescence to adulthood until he reached the perfect world he had glimpsed in them.

They are the dreams that all of us who aspired to be professional footballers, no matter how fleetingly and how hopelessly, once had. They are the dreams that you try to live out in the school playground or in a pub side on a cold, wet Sunday morning. They are dreams of excellence, dreams of being adored, dreams of goal-scoring, of people saying to watch you play football.

They are waking dreams for Bergkamp now. As he runs through them in this wonderful season that has seen the full blossoming of his talent, he ticks them off in his mind and thinks back to the days when his mother and his father, an electrician working night shifts, wanted him to follow in the footsteps of his three elder brothers, to go to university in Amsterdam and give up football.

In this season when he has, at times, looked like a roan playing on a different level from anyone else in the FA Carling Premiership, a level that he seemed to be beginning to recapture as he helped Arsenal to victory over West Ham United in their Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final on Tuesday night. The dreams have come to him with a bewildering rapidity.

The first came true on that magical, anarchic night at Filbert Street at the end of August when

Bergkamp, who had already scored two superb goals, ran on to a long ball deep into injury time with the sides level at 2-2, flicked the ball inside his marker with a sublime touch and curled it over Kasey Keller into the net. He wheeled away, his fists clenched, his jaw set, and fell to his knees.

"It was like something I dreamt about when I was a kid playing football on the street in Holland," Bergkamp said. "Everyone does it. I think. You run on to the ball and it is as if you are doing a commentary in your head: 'Bergkamp gets the ball... Bergkamp goes past his man... he only has the goalkeeper to beat... Bergkamp scores... what a goal! It was like a dream, only that night somebody else must have had a dream, too.'"

That night, Leicester ruined the reverie by grabbing an unlikely equaliser even deeper into injury time but back then Bergkamp was playing as if he was on a different planet. No one could get near him. The BBC even awarded him the first three goals in one of its Goal of the Month competitions, the first time that had ever happened.

Some of the fluency disappeared when he was forced to serve a three-match suspension last month. Injuries and bans on other players had disrupted the sweet rhythm that the Arsenal team had shown early in the season and for a few matches at the turn of the year, the Dutchman struggled to rediscover his form as he tried to regain his match fitness.

But the thrill of the flowering of his own football philosophy never went away. Quietly, politely matter-of-fact most of the time, always eager to understand, courteous and gentle, rapture enters his voice as he sits on a sofa at a hotel near St Albans and talks about his footballing thought patterns and the things that bring him joy in the game.

OLIVER HOLT



ever-present. Geordie asked, "Don't ask," the newsmagazine said. "The wife bought us the tickets at the start of the season for our Christmas presents."

Half of Bailey's

Many former players now earn a crust in the media — "The boy done well, Brian. He 'it the ball and it ended up in the back of the net" — but it is a safe bet that John Bailey, the Bournemouth winger, is unlikely to secure gainful employment on the airwaves when he hangs up his boots. Bailey, while serving a two-match suspension, guested as

a summariser for Radio Solent for his side's Nationwide League second division match against Bristol Rovers. Bournemouth rallied from 4-1 down at the interval before losing 5-3, but Bailey was unable to inform his listeners of the fightback. He was so disgusted by the first-half display, that he downed his microphone and walked off at half-time.

Hurst's lament

Jack Driver, the seven-year-old grandson of Geoff Hurst, the former England and West Ham United striker, was match mascot for West Ham's

Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final against Arsenal at Upton Park on Tuesday. Despite his grandfather's claret and blue connections, young Jack was not too displeased at the 2-1 defeat — he is an avid Gunners fan. "My daughter married into a big Arsenal family," Hurst reflected. "I don't think Jack fully realises who I am or what I was."

STRANGE BUT TRUE:

Chelsea defeated Ipswich Town 4-1 on penalties in their drawn Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final on Wednesday, the same spot-kick score that enabled them to beat Blackburn Rovers in the third round.

England's influx of foreign footballers continues unabated, despite the comments of Georgi Hristov, the Macedonia and Barnsley striker, whose love life appears to have taken a turn for the worse since he left Belgrade. Hristov's assertion that Barnsley lasses are facially challenged and drink too much is unlikely to have endeared him to the proud inhabitants of Yorkshire. At Sheffield Wednesday, continental talent is overflowing. For a Pontin's League premier division match against Derby County, Wednesday's 14-strong squad was made up of no fewer than ten nationalities. As well as five Englishmen, and the obligatory Scot (Steve Nicol) and Irishman (Jim Magilton), Wednesday used players from Italy (Stefano Visi), Sweden (Niklas Alexandersson), Denmark (Martin Nielsen), Slovenia (Primoz Gilha), France (Patrick Blondeau), Portugal (Gill Gomez) and Australia (Adam Poric). Derby countered with players from Jamaica (Dean Burton), Holland (Ron Willems) and Costa Rica (Mauricio Solis).

Keeping mum over Santa's surprise

NEWCASTLE United's incessant squealing at having to play their FA Cup fourth-round tie at Broadhall Way — the home of Stevenage Borough, the Vauxhall Conference club — has done little to improve the fat cat image of the FA Carling Premiership. Stevenage's incentive to indulge in further giant-killing, after their 2-1 victory against Swindon Town last Saturday, has probably quadrupled

after all the waiting from Tyneside this week. On a less sour note, the Newcastle grapevine has been abuzz with an amusing tale about the impossible task of obtaining a United season ticket.

Whether 'tis fact or fiction has become clouded but, apparently, a father and son were surprised to see two spare seats next to them, game after game, at St James' Park.

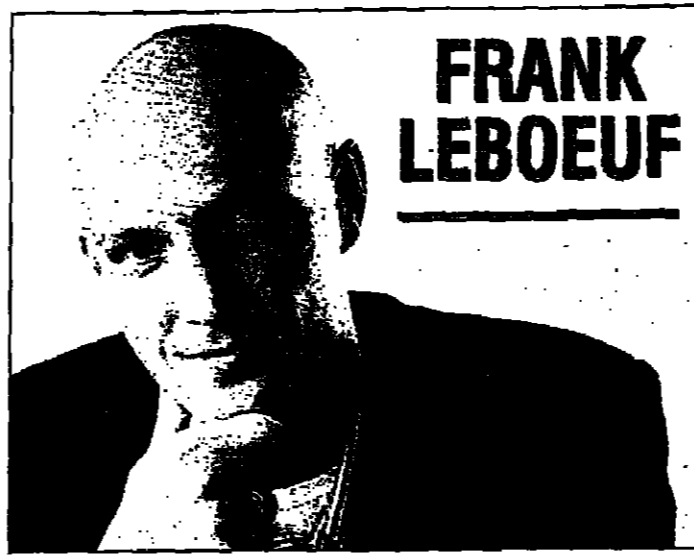


The ticket office told them that the places had been sold, but, eventually, in the new year, another father and son appeared. "Where have you been?" the

Advertisement for the Jeep Cherokee Limited, featuring a large image of the vehicle in a rugged, off-road setting. Text includes: 'JUST SOME of the features you get with the new Jeep Cherokee Limited.', '4 Wheel Sensor ABS', and 'Jeep THERE'S ONLY ONE'. At the bottom, it provides contact information: 'FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 0800 616159 OR WRITE TO JEEP INFORMATION SERVICE, FREEPOST 1048, SANDWICH, KENT CT13'.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Keeping a cool head over an insult that feel on deaf ears



FRANK LEOBOEUF

I will let you judge for yourself by looking at the picture of me that accompanies this column whether I have big ears or not. Somehow it seems to have become one of football's talking points of the week.

Stamford Bridge for which I can only apologise to the Chelsea supporters. They have been great to us all season and it hurts to think that we have given them such a bad display.

fantastically well at the moment and they were superb at Stamford Bridge, but Coventry City showed a couple of weeks ago that they are not infallible.

I spoke to Gianluca Vialli after the game on Sunday and we both agreed that they have a very good chance of winning the European Cup for the next couple of seasons.

place in the Cup Winners' Cup, third position in the league and a Coca-Cola Cup semi-final to look forward to. We lost one game, not a war, last Sunday. I am sure the fans were disappointed but I can assure them that we are trying to give our best. That will never change, whatever the result.

winning? I have said all along that the competition is a waste of time if there is no Uefa Cup place available. It is not as if it has any tradition like the FA Cup, in which it is an honour to play whatever the reward for the victors.

The League Cup depends on its European incentive and yet we are having to go through the season totally in the dark about whether we should be bothered about it or not.

Take the game against Ipswich Town on Wednesday. There was only one day to prepare for it properly because we had played United on the Sunday. We had to play extra time, then penalties and then travel back home from Suffolk to get to bed at 2.30am. Then we have just the Friday to plan a vital league game against Coventry.

There is absolutely no way Ruud Geulit would be picking a full-strength team for the trip to Ipswich if there was no European place on offer. He would be keeping players back and saving them for the games that really count.

It is a ridiculous situation and one that needs sorting out quickly. The semi-final games against Arsenal could be tremendous with a fantastic atmosphere. But it is cheating the players, and the spectators, if we do not know exactly what we are playing for.

Zola's cut above the rest Light relief at the training ground this week was provided by Gianfranco Zola with his new haircut. I don't know who did it, but some of the lads are convinced that it must have been his wife!

I have to say I did not recognise him when I saw him with his short hair. We are just all hoping that it does not have the same effect as Samson!

Confronting the birthday blues This is my last column before my 30th birthday, which is on January 22, and I feel as if I am approaching a significant landmark. It does not seem that long since I started out as a professional player a decade ago and that makes me worry how fast the remaining days will fly past.

I have spoken to fellow thirty-somethings, Mark Hughes, Gianluca Vialli and Steve Clarke, about it and they say you appreciate your playing days more and more as the clock ticks away.

I think I also have that advantage of having come to the game relatively late. I was released as a teenager and only started my professional career in my twenties, a few years after most of my contemporaries. Hopefully that has made me appreciate life as a footballer - even, hard as it is, on days like Sunday!

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Table with columns for team, played, points, goal diff, home record (W, D, L, F, A), away record (W, D, L, F, A), last 10 matches, and current streak.

WEEKEND MATCHES

Table listing today's matches, nationwide league, first division, second division, and other regional leagues.

ATTACK

Table showing goals scored and average per game for various teams.

SCORING TRENDS

Table showing goals per half for various teams.

SCORERS

Table listing top scorers and their goals.

CAUTIONS

Table showing cards issued (yellow and red) for various teams.

REFEREES

Table listing referees and their assigned matches.

DEFENCE

Table showing goals conceded and average per game for various teams.

CLEAN SHEETS

Table showing clean sheets and failed attempts to score for various teams.

HOME

Table showing attendance, average, and % full for home games.

AWAY

Table showing attendance, average, and % full for away games.

INTERNET

Table listing internet websites for various football clubs.

COVERAGE

TELEVISION: Today, BBC1: Match of the Day (including selected highlights of Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur...)



Statistics compiled by Julian Desborough

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page.



# European format needs to improve

I have enjoyed the challenge of tackling European opponents at club level

It is difficult to comment specifically on why clubs pulled out of Europe this week or what the alternative proposals might be because I have not read the document that has come from the clubs. From a player's point of view, I can say that I have enjoyed the European competition in the two years that I have been involved, the exposure it offers and the change from the usual league matches, even though I have not had the chance to go on and win it.

## LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO



only half again are likely to get picked for the national team. What I would like to see is an environment in which English players can be competitive in a high-quality competition. There are so many talented players who are playing at clubs that haven't qualified for Europe that it is a shame that we do not have a system whereby those players can play a higher class of rugby, be it for their club or someone else.

Let us hope that the situation resolves itself and that the various factions get around the table. Common sense should prevail because it would be a shame if the competition could not continue, even if it is not in its present format. Indeed, it would be disappointing if what has been announced became an eventuality. There is so much potential in that tournament, not necessarily under its existing structure but certainly under some sort of banner of European Cup rugby. There is no doubt that the structure of the tournament is not quite right — I was not happy with the way teams qualify, for example — and there is no doubt that it does need restructuring, but we do need the challenge of playing other countries' leading clubs and they need the challenge of playing us. Let's hope that Bath go on and win against Brive later this month.

What I would like to see is a competition in which we have more English players playing. The structure is up to other people to decide, but we have a side like Bath (who are the only English side to qualify for the last four of the Heineken Cup) and, out of that side, probably only half are Englishmen, of which

We are not talking about divisional rugby. The days of London against the South West are over. People realise that regional rugby does not work — the players do, administrators do and, contrary to what a lot of clubs think, so does the Rugby Football Union. We need to get the top English players on the pitch for the latter stages of a



Carling caps them all: He had a wonderful run in a golden era for England and is now showing he can handle a difficult situation

IT WAS a great honour for me to win the *Rugby Writers' Player of the Year* award on Wednesday. The dinner is always a good occasion, informal and relaxed, one where notebooks and pens are put away and anyone talking on anything more than a social level is hung, drawn and quartered. I remember going there in 1993, which was very much when things were starting to happen for me rugby-wise, and being very proud of Ben Clarke, who won it.

While I am happy that my efforts have been recognised, there is a tremendous amount of effort that goes unrecognised, particularly the support of your family.

It was very brave of Will Carling to attend, given the publicity that there has been surrounding his future over the past few days. I spoke to him there and I did sympathise with Will because everyone was trying to decide his future for him. It is always a bit annoying when other people tell you what you should be doing. When you've been as successful as Will Carling, you do things on your own terms. He obviously knew the time was right. Personally, I don't think he should have retired. He still has a tremendous amount to offer. He is a talented player with a lot of skill.

There was talk of him wanting to stay at Harlequins as he feels a lot for the club and I

can understand that he would not want to go elsewhere. There was speculation that Nigel Melville had approached him about coming to Loftus Road to help us out with our injury problems at centre, but his name was not mentioned specifically. Nigel just made a general inquiry about centres.

As England captain, I realise what a fantastic record he had and how difficult it must have been. Leading your country 59 times is a record that is unlikely to be surpassed. Will has done a fantastic job for England — the late Eighties and early Nineties were golden years for English rugby and Will being the captain, will always be remembered as being at the head of that era.

The emphasis has to be shifted towards quality rather than quantity. Under the present structure, there are a lot of matches and not all are of a similar quality. That is important if we, the players, are to bridge the gap between whatever structure we have below international rugby and the international game. Our job is to get on with playing. It is fair to say that we have enough on our plate without getting too involved in what is going on and, because we are employees, the reality is that we do as we are told. There is dialogue between the players and adminis-

trators at all levels, but those talks tend to be informal.

I am sure that there will be meetings taking place. The game needs to have a shop window at club level and European rugby created that. It can work under the right structure. What is important is that we arrive at a competition that is more about quality rather than quantity. As for the politics, I ignore it. You are professional now, you have to get on with your job in a professional manner. If you start getting caught up in the wider picture, it can affect your performance.

## Guscott on course for England comeback

BY MARK SOUSTER

SIX months after he last played, Jeremy Guscott is about to pick up the pieces of his interrupted career. Guscott, 32, has been included in the England squad that starts its build-up to the five nations' championship with a session at Bisham Abbey on Wednesday.

Guscott, whose dropped goal propelled the 1997 British Isles into the record books in Durban, broke his arm in the third international in Johannesburg in July. Having recovered from that, he was due to return against the Scottish Borders in European competition in September, but then suffered a bulged disc in his back that required an operation last autumn. There had been concerns that he might not play again, but Bath sent him to Lanzarote for winter weather training to assist his recovery and Guscott hopes to resume playing by the end of the month, possibly in time for the Heineken Cup final against Brive on January 31.

Guscott said yesterday: "Things have gone well since the operation and the surgeon has said there are no complications. It is just great to be back. I have missed plenty of rugby and I'm looking forward to the last few months of the season."

Tim Rodber is also back in the 24-man squad announced yesterday. Rodber was concussed playing for England A against New Zealand and was unable to force his way back into contention for the four matches against New Zealand, South Africa and Australia in November and December. Chris Sheasby, of Wasps, and Tim Stimpson, of Newcastle, are omitted from the squad that drew 26-26 with New Zealand at Twickenham.

**SQUAD:** Backs: M Pevry (Bath), D Ross (Sale), A Hurrey (Leicester), W Greenwood (Leicester), J Guscott (Eng), M Call (Bath), P de Gierville (Bath), P Grayson (Northampton), K Bracken (Saracens), M Dawson (Northampton), Foinisde J Leonard (Leicester), D Barforth (Leicester), K Yates (Bath), G Rose (Leicester), R Cockerill (Leicester), M Regan (Bath), M Johnson (Leicester), G Archer (Newcastle), D Greenwood (Saracens), L Dallaglio (Wasps), T Rodber (Northampton), R Hill (Saracens), T Diprose (Saracens), N Beck (Leicester)

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CHANGING TIMES



RUGBY UNION

Dispute is ill-fitting finale for Carling

By MARK SOUSTER

WILL CARLING'S retirement from first-class rugby, announced yesterday after several days of speculation, marks an unfortunate and inappropriate end to a glittering career. Given his ability to attract controversy, some would argue that it was all too predictable a way to finish, but that he should limp off stage without fanfare or ceremony does not seem right.

As much as he had wanted to continue with Harlequins — for whom he had genuine loyalty and affection — at least until the end of the season, it was made clear to him over the past 48 hours that the club's management backed Andy Keast, the director of rugby, in what had become an increasingly personal dispute — and one conducted through the media. For Keast, it had become a test of his authority and Carling decided on Thursday that enough was enough.

Carling said yesterday that retirement was "a huge wrench", but added: "It is the right decision for me. Although I have been flattered by the interest of other clubs, Quins is my club and I have always said I would end my playing days there. I'm genuinely sorry the relationship had become strained of late and I wish all at the club, including Andy Keast of course, all the very best."

Keast said yesterday: "I have the greatest respect for Will as a player and although things have not worked out as we would have liked over the past few months, there's no doubt that his departure will be a great loss."

In a statement, the club said that it was saddened but not surprised. "His has been a brilliant career at the highest level and he has been a wonderful servant both to rugby and to Harlequins."

To outsiders and those who did not know him, Carling, in his manner and demeanour, epitomised everything they felt they loathed about England, whose dominance of British rugby coincided with his emergence as captain under an unquestionably great team. He was dismissed as arrogant and aloof. Admittedly, on occasions he did not help his own cause, but he was misunderstood and wary.

diffidence, a trait that often manifested itself in perceived rudeness. He felt awkward in the spotlight and liked nothing better than to disappear to Cornwall to play golf. Conversely, under the guidance of Jon Holmes, his agent, he was not slow to take advantage of the commercial opportunities that being England captain presented. Critics accused him of greed and self-interest, but whatever his motives, he soon became a personality in his own right and public property, a man whose private life came under the closest scrutiny. His association with Diana, Princess of Wales, his broken marriage and his description in 1995 of the RFU committee as 57 old farts ensured he made front as well as back-page news.

That comment cost him the England captaincy — he was

THE CARLING YEARS

1988: Born in Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire. 1988: Wins first full England cap in 10-9 defeat by France in January. In November, becomes youngest English captain in 57 years in 28-18 win over Australia at Twickenham. 1991: Leads England to first grand slam for 11 years and to World Cup final. 1992: Appointed OBE. Captains England to second successive grand slam. 1993: Makes British Isles debut. 1993: Captains England to grand slam and fourth place in World Cup. Sacked and reinstated after "old farts" row. 1994: Leads England to triple crown, then reinstates captaincy. 1997: Wins 72nd cap, then retires from international.

reinstated after a public outcry — a position that Geoff Cooke had bestowed upon him at the tender age of 22 in 1988. Cooke described his appointment as his best decision. To the rugby public, he was a hero, who had helped drag England out of the doldrums. He led his country a record 59 times and to three grand slams. The last of his 72 England caps came against Wales last March.

There are regrets: losing to Scotland in 1990, his failure to establish himself as a British Lion and the fact that he never won the championship with Harlequins, who have granted him a testimonial. No doubt the full story of his demise will emerge in the book that he is writing with Paul Ackford, but for now we should remember his deeds as a fine player, who, to some, was also a flawed individual.

MARK SOUSTER



Record-breaking Queenslander prepares to hang up boots

In the new world of rugby, whose reputation has been sullied by controversy, greed and self-interest, Michael Lynagh shines like a beacon as a standard-bearer for the old order of old values and traditions. He is a gentle man and a gentleman. That is not to say he should be underestimated or taken advantage of. Indeed, few people will have got the better of a player who has left his imprint on the world game like few others before him and whose intention is to do likewise in whatever his chosen field after rugby.

Upon meeting a man whose appearance could be described as dapper, if that word did not conjure faintly derogatory connotations, it is clear that he believes that he and his ilk enjoyed the best of times, when rugby was not about pay cheques and professionalism — although he has always been totally professional in his outlook — but where friendships and enjoyment were worth far more.

Sure, it was hard, sure, there were pressures, but of a different kind. His world is also about dignity, chivalry, manners and consideration for others, values one could argue, that are gradually being lost not just in sport but in society as a whole. Yet it is also about control, a cool detachment that he lives life on his own terms in much the same way as he dictates events on a rugby field. His is also a whimsical yearning for what has gone before, more of a sadness that others may not be able to enjoy the experiences and opportunities that have enriched his life.



Lynagh lines up another practice kick at goal with all the attention to detail he showed on pitches around the world during an international career that brought him a record tally of 911 points. Photograph: Des Jensen

Benetton Treviso and met his wife, Isabella, and latterly London, as part of the Saracens revolution. More than just a part, perhaps the catalyst. His arrival in August, 1996 kick-started Nigel Wray's dream and invested it with credibility.

He had hoped to make up his mind about retirement over Christmas. It is a big decision to make. Several factors are involved, not the least of which is what he will do afterwards — certainly not coaching, however. Mulling

over the future has kept him awake at night, but the odds are that, within a fortnight, he will have opted to call it a day at the end of a season that he hopes and believes could well result in Saracens winning the Allied Dunbar Premiership.

When he does go, there will be no going back, not like David Carmese, his friend, whom, he jokes, has made a business out of retiring since 1990. Such is his personal commitment in London, where he lives in Hampstead with Isabella, who works for a City merchant bank, that they intend to stay on, at least in the short term before deciding whether to return to either Italy or Australia. It is likely that he will pick up the threads of a career in commercial property.

the club to the sceptics and converting the public has been part of the challenge for Lynagh, who played 72 times for Australia and is the record points-scorer in international rugby, with 911.

"I am happy to promote the team because it is fairly impressive. We have got something we don't have to lie about, something to be proud about. The jury is still out as far as I am concerned about the loud music, dancing girls and motorised car pegs [which bring his kicking tee on to the pitch], but I am changing. At a local school recently, an eight-year-old, who wouldn't know me from a bar of soap, said: 'I know who you are, you are the guy with the car. Do you play with that when you go home?' I said: 'Well it's not mine, but I'd like it to be.' 'I'd like one, too,' he said. If it gets him and his parents to the next game, it works."

"Last year, we were very disappointed with where we finished. This year, we changed a few things. Francois [Piensaar, the player coach] has done an unbelievable job. At the start of the year, there were people in the club who were sceptical of him, but he is a success-driven guy. He has

'A gentle man and a gentleman who stands out like a beacon'

been the person who has driven the club. Everybody has improved. Confidence has grown, as has the belief that the club is going somewhere."

Despite a good start, which has seen only one league defeat — by Leicester on Boxing Day — Lynagh feels that the team has only once played to its potential, that being against Bath, although even then it was not quite perfection.

It is in his nature to be concerned about the impact of professionalism on the lives of young players around him. "I do worry about what youngsters will do," he said. "I went to university, where I played international rugby, then got a job because I knew rugby wouldn't be there for ever. At Saracens, the young guys are studying. Doing something apart from sport is important. You become a better player if you have something to do rather than watch videos or play space invaders."

Clouds gather over Premiership

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

AS IF enough disruption had not already been caused to the fragmented league programme by international and European commitments, the chaos rendered by one spell of bad weather has left Bristol and Richmond counting the cost of postponed fixtures in the Allied Dunbar Premiership first division today as opponents catch up with rearranged fourth-round ties in the Tetley's Bitter Cup.

"Winter hasn't started yet," one senior club official said, "and if it does, we could still be playing in June."

Richmond were due to host Bath, who they will meet in the fifth round of the cup in two weeks' time, provided that the ten-times winners dispose of London Scottish at the Recreation Ground today in a tie postponed twice already.

A satisfactory pitch inspection yesterday removed the fear of Coventry, of the second division, that their lucrative home tie against Leicester might have to be switched to Welford Road.

Martin Johnson returns to the Leicester pack after injury. League form suggests that West Hartlepool should beat Wakefield, which would give them home advantage again, against Rugby or Reading, who at last get to stage their all-Jewons National League One encounter.

An inconsistent Sale side face three testing trips in eight days, first in the league today at Northampton, followed by their re-scheduled cup-tie at Moseley on Tuesday and then Saracens next weekend. Tim Rodber is back for Northampton and Jim Bramhall continues to assert himself in place of the absent Matt Dawson.

Harlequins, whose front row problems are partly resolved by Keith Wood's return after concussion, badly need to restore their morale in one of three first division matches tomorrow. Second-placed Saracens have slipped up just once at Vicarage Road this season, to Leicester, in which case Harlequins might be advised to adopt a "do it for Will" motto as they try and

claw back six points on the leaders. Top meets bottom at Kingston Park, as unbeaten Newcastle entertain local London Irish, who have won only two points from eight matches. The out-of-favour John Bentley and Tim Stimpson are again left out by the leaders. Influx into is blame, while Vavaiya Tuigamala, now a centre, becomes "Inga the winger" again for a match.

Wasps are asserting themselves gradually after a terrible first half of the season and they will need to sustain their momentum against an unpredictable Gloucester, who have Philippe Saint-Andre back after more than two months' absence.

Table with columns: Points, Tries, Pen, Tries and Pen, Overall. Lists statistics for various teams like Saracens, Newcastle, Leicester, etc.

Table with columns: Team, Tries, Con, Pen, D, Pts. Lists leading scorers for Premiership and Tetley's Bitter Cup.

RUGBY UNION FIXTURES

Table listing today's fixtures, including Premiership, National League, and various club matches with scores and kick-off times.

Virgin MegaSavers advertisement featuring Boston and other airlines, with a large image of a plane and promotional text.

RACING: COURSE WINNER CAN JUSTIFY TRAINER'S HIGH OPINION IN TOLWORTH HURDLE



Grey Shot has to overcome some high-quality opposition if he is to press his Champion Hurdle claims at Sandown Park this afternoon

King puts faith in Country Beau

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT
LISTEN to Jeff King for a few minutes about one of the most prized inmates of his yard near Swindon and you would be forgiven for thinking he is a zookeeper as much as a racehorse trainer.

The likely favourite is Grey Shot, whose flat-loving owner, Jeff Smith, was persuaded by Ian Balding to allow the former Goodwood Cup winner to have a crack at the winter game.

On his debut at Taunton, Grey Shot looked a natural and earned a 14-1 quote for the Champion Hurdle after prevailing by 23 lengths from Village King, who franked the course record at Ludlow earlier this week.

Country Beau, the subject of this unlikely affection, will travel to Sandown today and attempt to prove he is king of the National Hunt jungle by landing the Sun King of The Putners' Tolworth Hurdle (2.35) — one of the best hurdle races of the season.

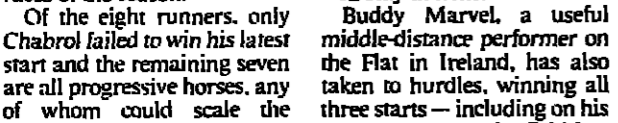
Of the eight runners, only Chabrol failed to win his latest start and the remaining seven are all progressive horses, any of whom could scale the hurdling heights this season.

LINGFIELD PARK

Table listing race results for Lingfield Park. Includes races like 'THUNDERER', '12.55 TYRONE MAIDEN STAKES', and '1.25 ARMAGH HANDICAP'. Lists winners and other participants.

WOLVERHAMPTON

Table listing race results for Wolverhampton. Includes races like 'THUNDERER', '7.00 SLEDGE HANDICAP', and '7.30 DOWNHILL CLAIMING LIMITED STAKES'. Lists winners and other participants.



Arguably, the best form performance recorded by any of today's field came from French Holly when he beat a decent field in a fast time at Haydock. Ferdie Murphy believes his runner is a Gold

With only one runner dropping out at the overnight stage, the Anthony Midway, Peter Cazale Memorial Handicap Chase (3.10) is another cracker.

SANDOWN PARK
THUNDERER
12.30 Lord Jim
1.00 City Hall
1.30 Greenback

1.00 FAIRLAWNE JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE
1.30 JIM FISHER MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE
2.05 SUN PUTTERS CLUB NOVICES CHASE

3.10 ANTHONY MIDWAY, PETER CAZALET MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE
3.40 HARRIER NOVICES HURDLE

3.35 FERMANAGH AMATEUR RIDERS HANDICAP
3.40 SOUTHWELL

12.30 LEVY BOARD / SANDOWN PARK HURDLE
1.00 LORD JIM
1.30 GREENBACK

1.00 LEVY BOARD / SANDOWN PARK HURDLE
1.30 LORD JIM
1.30 GREENBACK

1.00 LEVY BOARD / SANDOWN PARK HURDLE
1.30 LORD JIM
1.30 GREENBACK

1.00 LEVY BOARD / SANDOWN PARK HURDLE
1.30 LORD JIM
1.30 GREENBACK

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8/1 Top Cees 20/1 Casert Mountain

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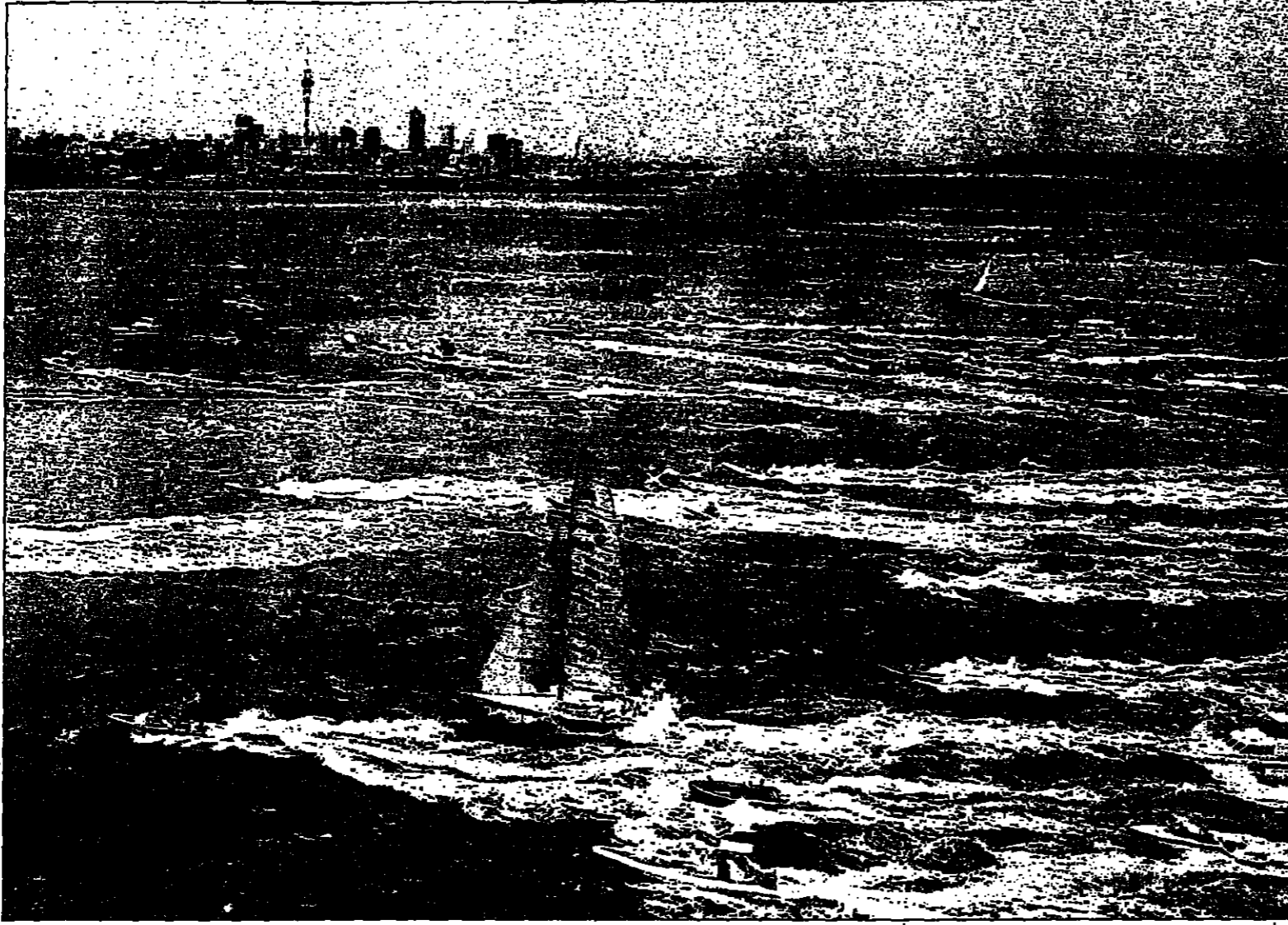
SAILING: CREW OF MERIT CUP HOLD FIRM TO SECURE VICTORY IN FOURTH LEG OF WHITBREAD RACE

# Dalton makes home advantage pay

By Edward Gorman  
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

THERE is nothing like a dramatic victory in front of your home crowd to restore some self-belief. Grant Dalton, skipper of Merit Cup, has been in the doldrums for the past six weeks after the shock of finishing seventh in Fremantle and then scraping home in fourth place in Sydney. Dalton had virtually convinced himself that he could not win this Whitbread Round the World Race in a boat with an Achilles' heel upwind.

But it was all change yesterday after Merit Cup held on to her lead at the end of the fourth leg, crossing the finish line between Orakei Wharf and North Head, in Dalton's home town of Auckland, just 2min 52sec ahead of Dennis Conner and Paul Standbridge, in Toshiba.



Merit Cup, surrounded by a flotilla of spectator boats, leads the race to the finish line and the acclaim of the home crowd in Auckland

## RESULTS

FOURTH LEG (Sydney to Auckland): 1. Merit Cup (Monaco) 12:46m 2. Toshiba (USA) 12:48.3 3. Chesapeake Racing (USA) 12:59.4 4. EF Language (Cuba) 1:10.5 5. Swedish Match (Swe) 1:27.6 6. Silk Cut (GB) 3:47.7 7. Innovation Kvaerner (Nor) 4:23.8 8. Brunel University (UK) 10:11.9 9. EF Education (Swe) 24.3

Overall positions: 1. EF Language 37:26.6 2. Merit Cup 353.3 3. Swedish Match 313.4 4. Innovation Kvaerner 297.5 5. Toshiba 296.6 6. Chesapeake Racing 294.7 7. Silk Cut 258.8 8. EF Education 100.9 9. Brunel University 96

Ten minutes later, George Collins with John Kostecki, on Chesapeake Racing, claimed their second successive third position, followed after another 12 minutes by Paul Cayard, in EF Language, who retains his overall lead in the race.

It was a gritty performance by Dalton and his crew from New Zealand, who held on in the teeth of a southwesterly wind gusting up to 40 knots as they bounced to windward into the Hauraki Gulf, trying to fight off not only the attentions of Conner and Standbridge but the wily tactics of Cayard and Mark Rüdiger, his navigator, who went outside the Hen and Chickens Islands in a last but ultimately futile attempt to catch the leaders.

Dalton, who was assisted on this leg by Tom Dodson with his tactics, blew his mainsail within 20 minutes of the line as he beat down the Rangitoto Channel, but it was too late for

Conner and the Toshiba crew to catch him.

With a first place plus second, fourth and seventh places, Dalton now finds himself propelled into second position overall with 333 points, just 39 points adrift of Cayard and with a Southern Ocean leg ahead that should suit the Aucklanders. Grinning from ear to ear, he stepped ashore to be welcomed by the faithful, who again turned out in their thousands to welcome the Whitbread fleet.

"I was telling my crew on the way in of the two greatest days in my life," he said. "The first was four years ago, when we beat Tokia [skipped by Chris Dickson] into here and the second was today, coming in first. It was a really hard battle — 35 knots all through

last night. We did not think that we were going to hang on to our lead, but I think we go quite fast when the water is flat."

The finish of the fourth leg was painful for three crews. Gunnar Krantz, skipper of Swedish Match, who saw a comfortable lead 200 miles out evaporate when he sailed into a hole in the wind off North Head, was speechless when he arrived in fifth place.

Having looked as though he was going to steal Cayard's lead, Krantz is back in third place overall. Also annoyed was Knut Frostad, at the wheel of Innovation Kvaerner, who finished in seventh place after getting his tactics "completely wrong".

Perhaps most disappointed, however, was Lawrie Smith, of Great Britain, who could

manage only sixth place in Silk Cut, which leaves him in seventh position overall, still mathematically capable of winning this race but now unlikely to be able to do so. Smith, who also blew his mainsail on the way in, said that there would be no changes in his crew and that he has not yet given up all hope.

"We messed up by getting too far north and we saw EF Language dive down south and take a temporary 30-mile loss," Smith said. "We didn't want to take the loss. We didn't do very well on this leg. You have got to go the right way and, with all the boats a similar speed, you have got to come in from one side or other. We will have a new mainsail and a new No 4 jib, but no new people."



Dalton holds the trophy after his fourth-leg triumph

# Boycott threat as BAF debts hit £2m mark

By David Powell, Athletics Correspondent

AS IT was revealed yesterday that the British Athletic Federation's debts have soared to more than £2 million, three leading athletes' agents were orchestrating a boycott of the first international track meeting in Great Britain since the sport was revealed to be facing financial crisis.

The controversy centres on a complaint from the agents that some of their athletes, who are owed money by the BAF for appearances in Britain last year, are being asked to compete for nothing at the Bupa Indoor Grand Prix in Birmingham on February 15. At the same time, Haile Gebrselassie, the Ethiopian distance runner, who is not a creditor having not raced on a British track since 1994, is being paid to appear.

Kim McDonald, the British agent who voted the best in the business by Europe's meeting directors, said he would not tolerate what he described as an "insult" to his athletes. McDonald is joined by Ray Flynn and Brad Hunt, two other top agents.

McDonald wants to know how API, the meeting promoter, and Ian Stewart, the meeting director, can justify paying Gebrselassie while asking runners to compete for prize-money only, when, "between myself and the athletes, we are probably owed between £130,000 and £140,000". The BAF went into administration in October and a recovery formula is being worked on.

When administration was announced, debts were put at about £1 million. "Figures discussed at the original press conference were those BAF discovered," Ron Speight, for the administrators, said. "We have had time to go through the figures in intimate detail."

Speight said that the new figure of £2,000,000 was no surprise. It includes £100,000 in redundancy payments and payments of notice that have arisen since October. Athletes are owed £860,000.

Daniel Komen, the 5,000 metres world record holder, John Mayock, Britain's fastest 1,500 metres runner, and Moses Kiptani, a former steeplechase world champion, are athletes that McDonald

feels have been treated unfairly. Mayock and Kiptani have been invited to chase a modest \$3,000 first prize in a 2,000 metres in which Gebrselassie will attack the world record.

McDonald said that he had received a fax from Stewart saying: "Unfortunately, I do not have any money to pay appearance fees. I attach information for prize structure for John Mayock and Moses Kiptani. As you are aware, the federation's financial situation is dire and we are working with a very restricted budget in difficult circumstances. I would appreciate your support."

Gebrselassie is represented by Jos Hermens, whose office confirmed that the athlete was being paid. Keen to avoid the impression of being mercenary, McDonald recalled that



Mayock chasing prize

"In 1992, I supplied \$80,000 worth of athletes to run in Belfast in the Les Jones Memorial". Jon Ridgeon, an API spokesman, said: "Kim is a respected guy and, coming from him, it is a concern. Ian has a budget in excess of \$150,000 to spend as he wants."

Stewart said that Kiptani would not want to race Gebrselassie and there was no alternative event for the Kenyan on the programme.

"We are paying appearance money for half a dozen athletes, everyone else is running for 'prize-money'", Stewart said. "It's unfortunate Kim feels that way, but I can understand his point of view."

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GUIDE

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Boycott threat as BAF debt hit £2m mark

Poor results of Test team and declining public interest addressed by West Indies Board

Caribbean confronts uphill task of restoring lost status

ACCORDING to a Caribbean proverb: "Force will make water go uphill." It means that things will work out with a little effort, which is an apt interpretation of the West Indian attitude to life in general and cricket in particular.

For two decades, things worked out very well for West Indies cricket — so well that, even if the effort diminished, the results did not. Suddenly, everything has changed. Results have fallen away and now it is being acknowledged that lack of effort is a factor. Success has bred an indolence that is proving hard to conquer.

For two days this week, the leading administrators of the Caribbean were gathered on Antigua. The public hung on their words and thoughts on their words and thoughts on their words...

Alan Lee on the new realities facing the former masters of Test cricket

rains and I have looked, aghast, at the building site formerly known as Antigua's Test ground. Doubtless, time will restore and improve it, but its current muddy wastelands make the staging of a Test match in ten weeks a challenging ambition.

That such farsightedness has not previously been conspicuous is confirmed by the tart remarks made recently by both Wesley Hall, the chairman of selectors, and Richie Richardson, captain until 1996.

It is not that the game here is dying. Hear that and laugh. It is just that it is no longer the dominant obsession of the people. Television is a growing distraction and schedules indicate the potential conversion to American sports.

Richardson, captain until 1996. Both have been damning in their criticism of planning. Both fear for the future. "There is a lot to be done," Camacho said, "and certain things are being put in place. Our priority, though, lies with the West Indies team and our discussions this week focused on whether what happened in Pakistan before Christmas was just a bad performance or a sign of a serious decline. Just as serious was the concern that our players did not apply themselves as well as the opposition."

Translated, the fear is that they did not try hard enough, that the years of success by routine has softened their resolve. Worst of all, that the day in 1976 when Clive Lloyd reacted with such anguished indignation to the manner of a defeat in Australia that he imposed discipline and dedication that served an entire generation has been forgotten. A legacy lost.

Well, not yet, while. Except for Jamaica, which is writing with resentment over the dismissal of their favourite son, Courtney Walsh, the Caribbean is opening its eyes and pricking its ears to the advent of Lara. Words of caution are appropriate and both Vivian Richards and Michael Holding have warned that Lara must change some of his insular, acquisitive and self-seeking ways if he is to grasp the nettle in the West Indies dressing-room.



Ruling class: Viv Richards celebrates scoring the fastest Test century in history, at Antigua in 1986

We must, because we cannot expect them to choose cricket automatically, as used to happen. The flow of talent, however, is worryingly thin. When Lloyd, the team manager, said in Pakistan that there must be changes, he knew it was a cry in the dark, for there is no queue of candidates for the Test team. Illustration of the fall in standards is provided by the performance of the West Indies A team on tour in South Africa at the moment. Clearly, the selectors cannot snap their fingers and produce a successful new team.

Political infighting, of a kind rarely seen in the good years, has surfaced unpleasantly. When Lara failed to gain the captaincy last autumn, the Trinidad authorities accused their counterparts of a "calculated plot to tarnish his image". On Antigua, the appointment of a Guyanese, Mark Harper, as coach to the Caribbean Cricket Centre has caused parochial jealousies.

Through it all, the game exists on a financial high wire. English cricket has its own problems of dependency on television rights, which produce 40 per cent of the game's central income. In West Indies, that figure can be greatly increased.

Sri Lanka rely on spin to take firm grip

THE Sri Lanka spinners, Muralitharan and Jayantha Silva, combined to leave Zimbabwe in danger of losing their first Test by an innings at the close of the third day in Kandy yesterday.

The pair dismissed Zimbabwe for a paltry 140 in the first innings, leaving them with a deficit of 329. They tumbled into worse trouble in their second innings, finishing on 71 for two after being asked to follow on by Arjuna Ranasingha, the Sri Lanka captain. Zimbabwe require 258 to make Sri Lanka bat again.

Muralitharan, whose action has attracted the attention of the world cricketing authorities, was the more troublesome of the spinners, taking five wickets for 23 runs off 29 overs. Except for a patient innings of 53 by Gavin Rennie, the opening batsman, and a brisk 35 from Paul Strang, the rest of the Zimbabwe batsmen failed to come to terms with the Sri Lanka attack. Rennie's stay of more than 4 1/2 hours at the crease ended when he drove Silva to mid-on, where Aravinda de Silva took the catch.

Following on, Grant Flower, who made 38, and Rennie, who scored 24, defied the bowlers for 19 overs before both wickets fell to de Silva, an occasional spinner, with the score on 68.

SRI LANKA: First Innings: 469 for 9 (sic); Sri Lanka: 223, P A de Silva 75

ZIMBABWE: First Innings table with columns for Player, Runs, Balls, and Strike Rate. Includes names like G J Rennie, G W Flower, M W Goodwin, etc.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-29, 2-36, 3-46, 4-72, 5-76, 6-119, 7-127, 8-154, 9-166

ZIMBABWE: Second Innings table with columns for Player, Runs, Balls, and Strike Rate. Includes names like G J Rennie, M W Goodwin, etc.

Shah rallies forces for World Cup campaign

THE problems affecting Caribbean cricket are not limited to senior level. An extraordinary administrative error means that West Indies have had to replace seven members of the 14-strong squad for the Under-19 World Cup, which begins tomorrow at The Wanderers, Johannesburg, where South Africa play India.

Apparently, the West Indies Board of Control was unaware that all players in the tournament had to be born after September 1, 1978, and originally selected seven who were ineligible.

All the Test-playing nations are represented among the 16 teams competing in four groups, the top two from each going forward to play in two Super League pools, the winners of which will meet in the final.

England, who begin their programme against New Zealand on Monday — Namibia and Bangladesh

John Stern, in Pretoria, says England's form does not encourage hopes for Under-19 tournament

are also in their pool — ought to be well placed to make a good impression for they are used to the pitches and the conditions, having been on tour for the past six weeks. However, their results have been poor and predictions that they would be seen at their best in 50-over games have not been borne out.

Owais Shah, the Middlesex batsman and the England captain, acknowledges that his side have much ground to make up if their potential is to be realised. "The batsmen need to show more application — and that includes me," he said. "I suppose, as the senior player on tour, I need to pull my finger

out. I have believed from the start that we are a good one-day side and, if we can click as a team, then there's no reason why we can't reach the final.

Shah believes that India, who include members of the side that won the Under-15 World Cup at Lord's two years ago, and Australia, the holders, coached by Allan Border, are the favourites for the trophy. Pakistan, though, have tremendous talent and experience and include Hasan Raza,

the youngest scorer of a first-class double century, who is, according to the tournament's official literature, still only 15.

While most of the players involved are unknown to all but the keenest students of the game, their coaches could form the basis of a very useful side. With Border as captain, it would include Dayle Hadlee, the brother of Sir Richard and a useful fast bowler in own right, Gus Logie, the former West Indies batsman, Kris Srikkanth, a dashing opening batsman for India, Omar Henry, the former South Africa left-arm spinner, who is charge of Namibia, and the England seam bowler, Mike Hendrick, coach to Ireland.

Sri Lanka, who include members of the side that won the Under-15 World Cup at Lord's two years ago, and Australia, the holders, coached by Allan Border, are the favourites for the trophy. Pakistan, though, have tremendous talent and experience and include Hasan Raza,

Pakistan drop leading bowlers

PAKISTAN are preparing to leave out both Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, their formidable strike bowlers, who have over 500 Test wickets between them, for the tour of South Africa and Zimbabwe starting later this month.

The primary reason is understood to be an independent inquiry into the manner in which the team lost one-day matches to England and West Indies in Sharjah last month.

This should be completed in the next few days. The chances of either making the tour were described by one of the national selectors, Zaheer Abbas, as "remote".

Zaheer, a former Pakistan captain, has disassociated himself from the 15-man party

chosen earlier this week. "I have written a letter saying that I do not accept this team. Players should not be left out without evidence against them," he said yesterday. The three-man selection panel is chaired by Salim Altaf and completed by Shafiq Ahmed, both former Test players.

The full team will not be disclosed publicly until it has received clearance from the executive committee of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), but has been listed, and given extensive analysis, in the Pakistan press.

"The executive has not overruled the findings of the selectors in the past, though there is

always a first time," Majid Khan, the chief executive of the PCB, said yesterday.

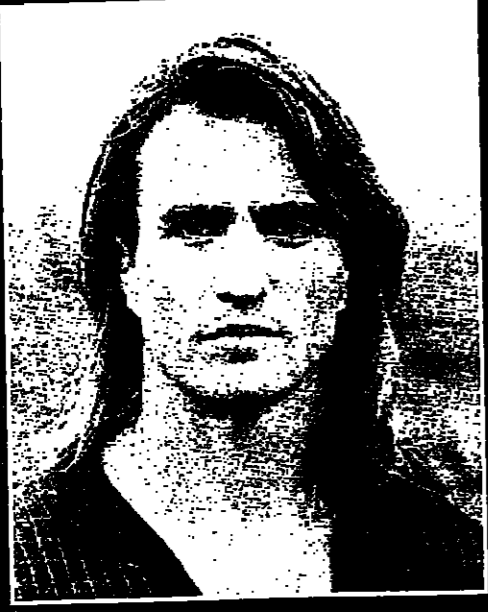
Earlier this week, Wasim Akram resigned as the Pakistan captain, citing the pressures the job had placed on himself and his family. He talked then about a recurrence of an old shoulder problem, but he is now due to play in a match today for Pakistan International Airlines.

Rashid Latif, who walked out of Pakistan's previous tour of South Africa, is expected to be named captain.

The selectors have also overlooked Aqib Javed, leaving Pakistan with only their most inexperienced fast bowling attacks for years.

GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES and FOR THE RECORD. Includes tables for Football, Basketball, Bowls, Rugby League, Hockey, and other sports. Also includes a 'FOR THE RECORD' section with statistics and 'SNOW REPORTS'.

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**MOTORING**

Jeremy Clarkson: "The passengers in the back were offering me money to slow down ..."



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News Editor

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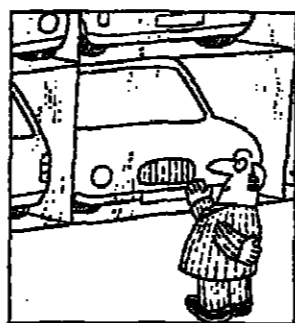


THE SECTION FOR CARS, BIKES, BOATS AND EVERYONE ON THE MOVE



Glamour and reality on our roads

Page 48



Price fixing on the forecourt

Page 49



Safety heroes are out of date

Page 51

go

SATURDAY JANUARY 10 1998



Water hazard in Honiton, Devon: giant lorry wheels can throw up a wall of water which car drivers cannot see through. They risk losing control on the soaked surface if they have to brake when they emerge to find something in their path

# Let us not spray, says Mercedes

Kevin Eason looks at the German carmaker's distinctly low-tech solution to the risk of passing lorries in the rain

Millions of motorists on drenched roads this week suffered blind panic as the sheer weight of water thrown up from huge lorry wheels smacked on to their windscreens.

The force is like a downpour from Niagara, with each truck tyre able to spray 65 gallons of water a minute into the path of oncoming cars at motorway speeds. The result is a wall of water into which car drivers venture at their peril: they cannot see through it and risk losing control on the soaked road surface if they have to brake when they emerge into clear vision only to find something in their path.

At last though, scientists have come up with an answer which may be simplicity itself but could transform driving on the sort of roads which have confronted drivers over the past week. A system invented by Mercedes-Benz can reduce spray from articulated lorry wheels by 80 per cent.

Yet it is little more than a series of grooves and a funnel into which the water is channelled. No fancy electronics or gadgets, just a piece of ingenious lateral thinking.

Nor did designers have a Eureka-like experience when they came up with the system for their latest Actros truck range. The men in Stuttgart simply sat around a table for months on end until eventual-

ly the system — which does not even have a name — emerged as the solution. It obviously works because it won this year's prestigious road safety award from the AA.

Paul Halata, Mercedes' UK managing director, says: "Most of the safety innovations that Mercedes-Benz has put into the Actros are highly technical, but this shows that there is always room for simple ideas that work well."

Trucks have big, heavy wheels which can suck water up from the road and then spin it in the motorway equivalent of a washing machine before spewing spray out on to the road or pavement.

The statistics are astonishing: the average truck wheel is a foot wide and 42ins high — and there are as many as 14 of them on an articulated lorry and trailer typical on European motorways.

On the sort of wet days we have encountered in this first sample of winter weather, a single 14-wheel artic' throws up almost 1,000 gallons of water a minute cruising along the motorway at the legal lorry limit of 56mph. In the past, there has been nothing more than mudflaps to contain the drenching, but they do little more than deflect the water.

On the Actros though, the water is contained in the wheel arches and fed into fluted channels which push the stream into a plastic funnel to

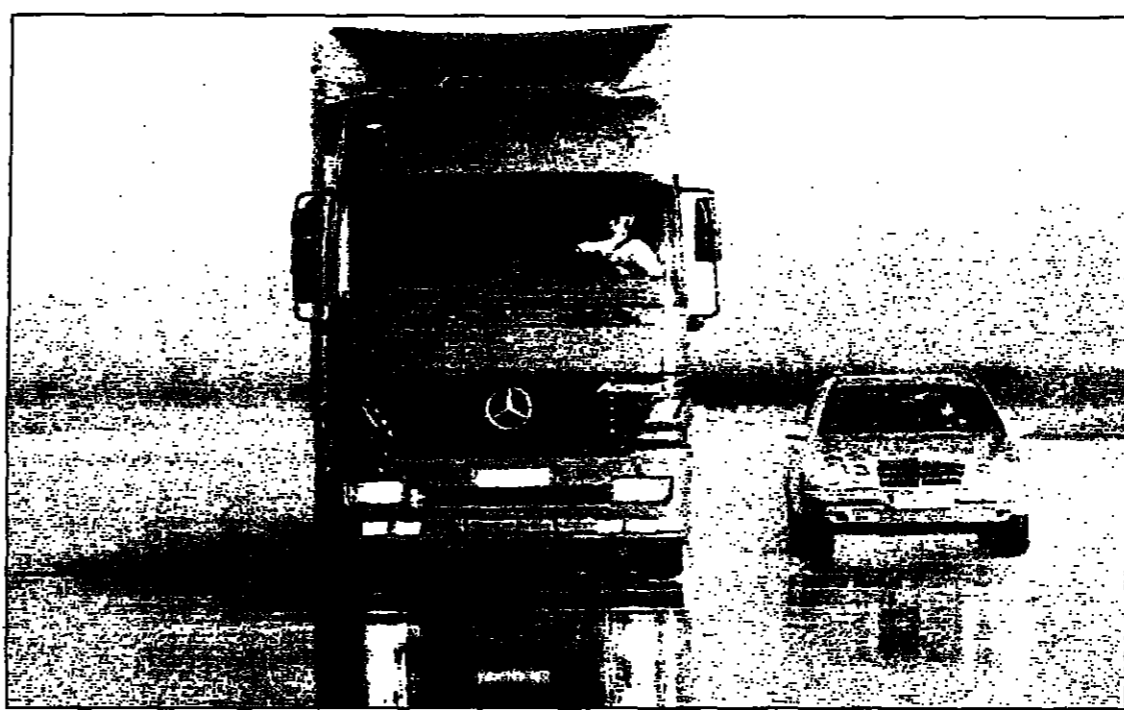
deposit the load under the centre of the trailer. Simple but incredibly effective, as our before and after pictures show.

Sometimes the simple ideas are the most effective though, as Nissan and BMW are both proving.

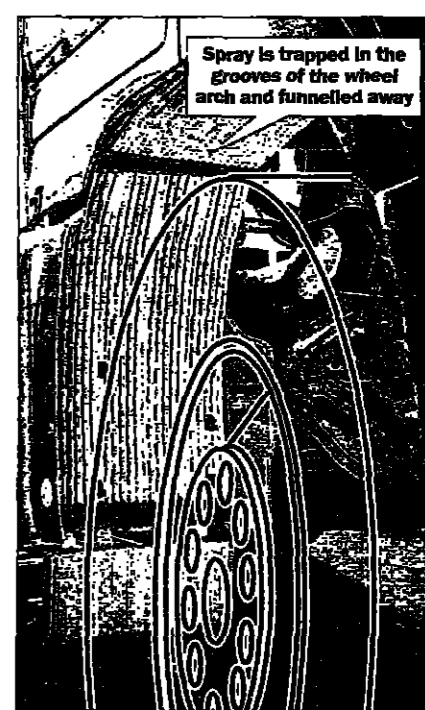
Drive for an hour in filthy rain and one of the first things to be covered in road dirt and water is the wing mirror. But Nissan has developed a self-cleaning wing mirror, the glass covered with a thin coating of titanium dioxide and silica.

When raindrops hit the mirror, they spread out across the coating to form a thin, quick-drying film. Meanwhile, ultra-violet rays from the sun have a photocatalytic effect on the titanium dioxide which decomposes oil and dirt. The new mirrors will be fitted to cars on sale in Japan this year and spread around the world after that, including to the Micra and Primera models made at Washington, Tyne and Wear.

Again, simple but promisingly effective in the dark days of winter — as could be an invention by BMW. Keeping the windscreen clean and clear is just about the most difficult job for the winter driver. A visit to the carwash or a thorough job with soapy water and sponge usually has an



Fluted channels carry spray under the trailer, top, instead of creating a Niagara to blind motorists



Spray is trapped in the grooves of the wheel arch and funnelled away

effectiveness of about two minutes as the rain and sleet hammers out of leaden skies.

BMW covers windscreens with a secret solution which prevents droplets of water joining up to become a vision-impairing stream. At speeds over 40mph the droplets sim-

ply blow away, while below that speed the wipers have a much easier job. A similar system has been used on the cockpit windscreens of planes but never reached car production until BMW decided to introduce it on its 8-series.

Apart from clearing the

screen of water, BMW claims that insects find it more difficult to stick to the glass, while there is reduced glare at night and less wear for the windscreen wipers. The treatment should last for about a year, but retreatment kits will be available as BMW spreads its

secret solution wider across its range of cars.

The BMW treatment goes to show that the march of technology strides on — occasionally overtaking our imaginations. The self-cleaning windscreen was a brilliant April Fool's Day prank

dreamed up BMW's press office three years ago... and then came true, to much embarrassment.

"It just shows how developments can go from April Fool to reality in a relatively short space of time," was the official line yesterday.

## WINTER DRIVING

- Think before you go out. If your journey is not necessary, don't go. If it is, allow more time than usual.
- First scrape any rain, ice or snow from the windscreen and all other glass. (Don't use boiling water, you may crack the screen).
- Check that you have sufficient fuel, tyres are properly inflated and that wipers and lights are working properly. Use them.
- Take a mobile phone or make sure you have coins and a phonecard.
- A basic survival kit should include: torch, jump leads, spare bulbs and fan belt, a can of WD40 and a warning triangle.
- In ice or snow add a tow rope, a small shovel, a blanket or aluminium foil "space" blanket, a can of petrol, first aid kit, warm clothing and food and drink (a Thermos of tea or coffee if it's sub-zero).
- Use dipped headlights, keep your distance and remember to slow down in high winds, heavy rain, fog and for flooded roads.

## It's not only millionaires who can afford to splash out and float away

The madness of boating is such that most pleasure craft spend only 50 to 80 hours a year travelling anywhere. The rest of the time boats lie idle or owners go aboard simply to tinker or relax.

Yet it can cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to get afloat, as a glance round this week's London International Boat Show will verify, where the largest vessel, the 68ft Princess 20, costs nearly £1 million.

But, despite the costs, there are around 2.5 million boat owners in the UK and few are millionaires. So how do you go boating on the cheap? The obvious answer is a small boat, and it doesn't necessarily mean less fun: "It seems a truism that the smaller the boat, the more fun you have. The bigger the boat, often the more of a

### Vaughan Freeman on the economies of boat ownership

responsibility it can seem," says Alan Harper, editor of *Motor Boat and Yachting*.

What you shouldn't do is rush out and buy, warns Jon Challis of the Royal Yachting Association: "The first thing anyone needs to do is to find out whether they will enjoy being afloat, whether it will make them sick or not. That is best done by going on a trial session or a small taster course."

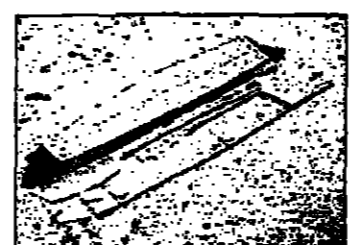
RYA-recognised Sea Schools offer training in all aspects of sailing, with prices ranging from £250-£600 for a five-day course. Motor, cruising and powerboat

courses range from a basic introduction to motor cruising to the Yachtmaster Ocean Certificate, and RYA-approved courses cost £50-£400.

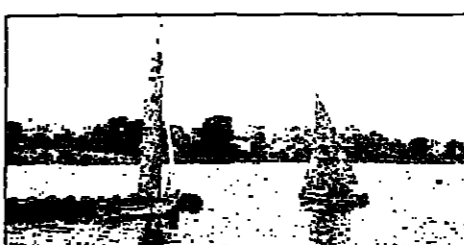
There are scores of RYA-recognised windsurfing centres offering tuition, costing £20-£30 for a few hours' initial instruction up to £260 for windsurfing holidays in Greece, to £1,150 for similar programmes in Barbados.

"Get some sensible tuition," says Challis. "There is a danger that people who buy boats off the shelf take them out without proper tuition, scare themselves silly, then go home, put the boat in the garage, and never use it again."

There are 1,200 teaching centres affiliated to the RYA with certified levels of training, safety and equipment, and 1,500 sailing or boating clubs, which means



SeaHopper Kontender: only two people needed for assembly, and it withstands 6-7 force winds



that somewhere near you there is a pond, a puddle or some sea-board to get afloat on."

Such centres are also the ideal place to start hunting for that first, second-hand boat. Magazines such as *Practical Boat Owner*, which carry hundreds of adverts, and publications such as *Buy A Boat*, which only advertises vessels costing less than £10,000, feature everything from 20ft Gaff cutters for £1,500, to £2,000 catamarans and £3,000 speedboats.

The important thing is to think ahead. Why buy a great long boat, that will generate mooring fees of hundreds of pounds a year, when you really only need something 20ft long that can sit on a trailer in the garden?

What about fitting the boat out? Roger Horton, secretary of the Boat Jumble Association, says:

"You can find brand new equipment at a jumble, typically selling at a third off what you might pay in a chandlery, and there is all the second-hand equipment, the price of which is down to haggling with the vendor."

Royal Yachting Association: 01703 627400. Boat Jumble Association: 01403 256526. Yacht Brokers, Designers and Surveyors Association: 01420 473862.

One of the cheapest ways to take to the water is with a folding boat of the kind made by SeaHopper in Wellington, Somerset. They will be showing a 10ft version priced at £1,990 which can be carried on top of a car and assembled by two people.

The Kontender weighs just 80lbs and has been tested in winds of force 6-7 in the Exmouth Estuary in Devon, surviving the conditions comfortably single-handed.

She has also been tested in milder weather with two adults and a ten-year-old child aboard and proved as responsive as a mirror class sailing dinghy. SeaHopper: 01823 663666.

The International Boat Show opened at Earls Court yesterday until January 18. For information call 01784 473377.

SATURDAY JANUARY 10 1998



# How we love our great British bangers

Ever more motors are lasting into smoky old age, says Kevin Eason

Britain's roads are turning into moving scrapyards as motorists refuse to send millions of old bangers to the breakers. Four in ten cars are now more than nine years old, according to a survey on the used car market by British Car Auctions.

The report gives the lie to sexy advertising images of a nation of drivers sweeping through the countryside in new cars packed with electronics gaudery. The most popular car is still Ford's MkIII Escort, a model that has not been made for seven years. More than a million are being driven, while the top ten list of the nation's favourites is littered with ancient Austin Merros, Vauxhall Cavaliers and even the Sierra, a car Ford dumped four years ago.

Yet the list of top ten best-selling new cars from 1997 shows that the faces might have changed, but the same badges rumble on. There they are: Fiesta, Escort, Astra, and for Cavalier read Vectra.

The difference is that modern cars last longer and longer. More than 40 per cent of cars sold 15 years ago have survived and are still being driven, testimony to the fact that they are better made with tougher bodies and stronger and more reliable engines.

The report says: "The average age of cars is increasing, from 6.2 years in 1990 to 7.2 years in 1996. Clearly, better design and build quality has increased the longevity of cars and, in turn, motorists' willingness to rely on them."

The number of used cars sold last year - 7.8 million - outnumbered new car sales by nearly four to one, and were worth £25.9 billion. £5bn more than new car purchases.

However, as motorists buy more cars they add weight to nightmare predictions of more congestion and dirtier air. Three-quarters of used models are

- ### 1997 TOP SALES
- 1 Ford Fiesta
  - 2 Ford Escort
  - 3 Ford Mondeo
  - 4 Vauxhall Vectra
  - 5 Vauxhall Astra
  - 6 Vauxhall Corsa
  - 7 Peugeot 306
  - 8 Rover 200
  - 9 Rover 400
  - 10 Renault Clio

the main family car, but longer-lasting cars are allowing families to fill their drives with more cars. One in five was bought as a second or third car.

The result is that there are 24.9 million cars on the road - 1.9 million more than five years ago when the used-car market started to grow strongly, overtaking the value of new car sales.

Cars made before 1993, however, are unlikely to have the latest "environmentally friendly" technology and will consume more fuel than their modern counterparts, facts to worry ministers formulating a "green" transport policy.

The RAC claims that the oldest 10 per cent of cars cause 50 per cent of pollution, and with the age of the car population increasing, it seems unlikely much will change unless motorists are encouraged to scrap the oldest cars that do not qualify as classics.

The report also helps to nail the prejudice against company cars: only one in ten is company-owned, although half of all new car sales are to companies, which means fleets are operating the cleanest and safest models, while private buyers own more than 21 million cars, most of which have outdated technology.

There are more used car sales per head of population in



While the advertising people might want us to believe we are driving sleek, gizmo-filled new machines between assignments and nightspots, the reality is rather different

### BRITAIN'S FAVOURITE BANGERS

MAKE	YEAR	NUMBERS £
1 Ford Escort MkIII	1980-90	1,118,025 on road
2 Ford Fiesta MkIII	1983-95	822,248
3 Austin Metro MkI	1980-90	742,557
4 Vauxhall Cavalier MkII	1983-95	731,710
5 Ford Escort MkIV	1990-	730,048
6 Ford Sierra MkII	1982-93	708,729
7 Ford Fiesta MkII	1983-89	655,763
8 Vauxhall Cavalier MkI	1981-88	519,050
9 Vauxhall Astra MkII	1984-91	505,673
10 Vauxhall Astra MkI	1981-87	487,662



Keep on rolling: Ford's Escort and Fiesta are the nation's favourite second-hand buys

### ASTON MARTIN

DB7 3.3 Auto, registered Jan 96, metallic green 7,000 miles cream leather Aston Martin 18" alloys. Aston Martin club cover. £54,500.

tel Daryl Barlow 0161 9054327

### DB7 Volante

Convertible Auto '96P, M16 Blue/Magnolia blue, piped Blue, twin airbags, 18,000 miles, FSH, £74,995 only Plus & HP avail

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### ASTON MARTIN DB7

3.3 Auto, registered Jan 96, metallic green 7,000 miles cream leather Aston Martin 18" alloys. Aston Martin club cover. £54,500.

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**LOTUS**

**ELAN SE 1992 CD 2000 cc**  
 1992, 110,000 miles, 1700 cc, 10000 cc, 1700 cc, 10000 cc.

### MERCEDES

**1995 Astra G 1.6i, 1600 cc, 10000 cc**  
 1995, 110,000 miles, 1700 cc, 10000 cc.

**1994 Astra G 1.6i, 1600 cc, 10000 cc**  
 1994, 110,000 miles, 1700 cc, 10000 cc.

**1993 Astra G 1.6i, 1600 cc, 10000 cc**  
 1993, 110,000 miles, 1700 cc, 10000 cc.

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### Mercedes C180

From Only £68 Per Week

Contact: Mike Smith  
 Tel: 0171 987 1999

### SLK

1.8i, 1600 cc, 10000 cc

1.9i, 1900 cc, 10000 cc

Contact: 0411 16062

### SLK230

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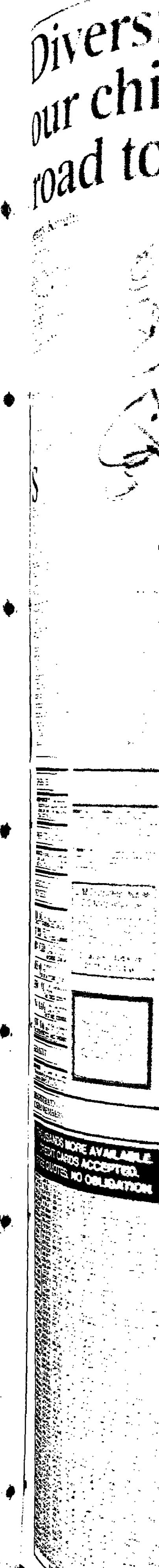
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Diversions on our children's road to safety

Jenny Knight on how Tufty and the Green Cross Man failed to teach vital lessons

"Billy Beacon, you are charged with teaching the basics of road safety. You are a waste of time. You have spent years telling children how to cross the road, but the latest thinking on road safety alleges that you have done very little to save lives."

Some experts now believe that the history of road safety education for children has been a sorry combination of the wrong approach and too little sustained teaching.

Thousands upon thousands of children were told how to cross a make-believe road by a talking belisha beacon; many children suspected that Billy Beacon's voice had something to do with the policeman hiding behind a curtain near the toy car.

The concept of road safety education first arose in 1917 when London's pedestrians started to be mown down by buses during the First World War blackout.



Tufty: 48,000 branches, but he was only a starting point

The message of the Green Cross Code was reinforced by the Green Cross Man - played by actor Dave Prowse, later to become famous as Darth Vader in Star Wars, in a Batman-style outfit, who toured the country giving road safety tips.

Road safety education is now an expensive business. More than 150 road safety officers are employed by local authorities and there are a



Billy Beacon and friends in 1954 and Dave Prowse, later to become Darth Vader, as the Green Cross Man

number of sophisticated schemes to help child pedestrians.

However, the way children have traditionally been taught to cross the road differs dramatically from the way grown-ups actually do it. Far from waiting until there is no traffic in sight, adults start walking in anticipation of a gap. They cross between parked cars - not least because the vehicles offer some sort of protection - and often run. In fact, adults use all the strategies that generations of children have been taught could lead to disaster.

On The Move, an education pack produced by the British Institute of Traffic Education Research (Biter) and the AA, which has been bought by 2,600 schools, is typical of the new style of teaching which tries to help children develop their own judgment to deal with traffic dangers in a more realistic way.

It is now believed that teaching must take into account the way young children

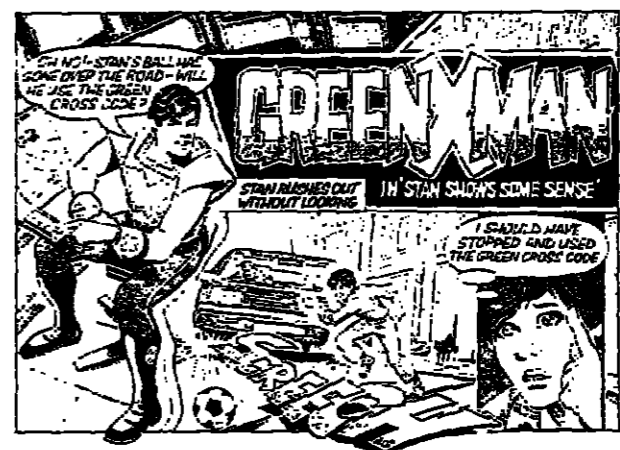
think and what they are afraid of. It should continue over a period of months and involve actual road experience.

Valerie Platt, education adviser at Biter, said: "We started by trying to take the child's perspective. They knew they had to stop, look and listen, but many didn't know what they were listening for."

Young children don't see a road as an isolated environment. They may be more alarmed by a dog tied up nearby than they are by fast traffic. Our pack is about evolving strategies to develop a degree of independence and help them assess situations. It teaches them to ask 'is it safe?'

There are activities to help children learn to judge distance and speed, to think about where it's safe to play and how the weather conditions may affect traffic.

Dave Rogers, road safety adviser at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents,



Green Cross comic strip teaching a tedious six-point code

added: "There used to be an assumption that if children could recite the Green Cross Code they were safe. Some road teaching is as much use as a chocolate teapot."

"Kids might love playing on mini zebra crossings with little cars, but it can be of limited value if the lessons are not reinforced. Sometimes a

single visit can be worse than nothing if teachers then think road safety has been covered."

Other experts disagree, saying even one visit can be useful. BP has taught road safety to more than three million children by taking toy cars into schools for more than 25 years.

nine are involved in 45-minute playlets teaching the basics of road safety. Workbooks and song tapes are left to enable teachers to give follow-up road safety messages. The BP scheme won the Prince Michael Road Safety Award in 1996.

Retired road safety officer Dorothy Pummell, 77, said: "I agree that more than one reminder a year is necessary, but there is such pressure on school timetables that anything is better than nothing. The police used to use Safety Sam to teach road safety on the 'Now, Kiddies, Listen to this' principle. Then there was the Green Cross Man, whom I thought was rather silly."

"Over the years we evolved a more proactive way of talking to children, and by using Tufty we were able to get into pre-school play groups with a road safety message. I'm sure that we did a lot of good. If nothing else, each school visit gave the children a jerk at the time."

PORSCHE advertisement listing models and prices.

PORSCHE WANTED advertisement.

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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION

Main table containing unit trust prices, organized by fund name and category. Includes columns for fund name, price, and other financial metrics.

The Samaritans 0345 90 90 90

Large advertisement on the right side of the page featuring the text 'Why C' and 'Perma' with a stylized image of a person's face.



IN THE LURCH 55  
Women who had to leave a pension scheme on marriage

# WEEKEND MONEY

HALF-TIME 58

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## Why companies fancy a handout

Share buybacks and special dividends are in fashion with many companies.

Bruce McWilliams explains why

The phrase share buyback has a nice ring to it, like windfall or manna from heaven. Unfortunately, it is not quite as good as it sounds, although you could end up with some extra cash in your pocket.

For example, when Legal & General, the huge insurance group, this week announced a share buyback, the price of the stocks jumped by 7.7 per cent. In comparison, the FTSE 100-share index hardly moved with a 1.3 per cent gain on the same day.

In the past few months, diverse companies such as Reuters, GEC, Northern Ireland Electricity, BG, and Bass have all made announcements that they plan to return some funds to their shareholders.

The other way of returning funds to shareholders is by means of a special one-off dividend or through the issue of a special share.

Because advance corporation tax (ACT) must be paid on these special dividends, the more usual form is the issue of special shares, which can immediately be turned into cash.

Here Weekend Money explains why companies are returning money to their shareholders and how the process works. Unfortunately, because an announcement of a cash return to investors usually increases the share price, it is a well guarded secret until the general announcement is made.

But a company with lots of cash in its coffers is usually a good candidate to offer a cash distribution.

For example, at the time of the Halifax Building Society's conversion to a bank last summer, Mike Blackburn, the chief executive,

hinted that if the huge Halifax cash store could not be put to better uses, such as an acquisition, then a special dividend specifically to return money to investors would be considered.

Q Why do companies want to return money to their shareholders?

A A share buyback is just one of a number of devices that finance directors use to improve their company's share price.

The role of the finance director to determine the best mix of bonds and shares at the lowest cost while providing shareholders with the greatest return without any undue risk on their part.

Q Why are the share buybacks all happening now?

A According to Robert Vartevarian, a director of SBC Warburg, today's low-interest rate and low-inflation environment make it a good time to replace expensive equity with lower cost debt. In the early 1990s interest rates were in the low teens as opposed to today where rates are half that level.

The second reason for the rush to returning shareholder funds is that a company's management may feel that there are not sufficient good opportunities to spend it. Reuters, for example, has announced a distribution of £1.5 billion of special shares along with a £200 million share buyback.

Jeff Wicks, director of corporate relations for Reuters, said his company did not want to make acquisitions far afield from the company's basic area of expertise.



Quelle largesse: like a country's corporate treasurer, Eva Peron, in the film Evita, distributed cash and gifts to Argentina's poor

He said: "If shareholders can make better use of the funds than the company can, then the company should return them."

Q So exactly how does the share buyback work?

A In a straight forward, old-fashioned share buyback, the company does exactly that. It goes into the market place very quietly and actually buys back shares from existing shareholders. Typically,

this will take place over six months to a year. The company knows that if it were to buy a huge quantity of shares at once, this would drive up the price and it would be unable to buy as many shares as it had originally planned.

For example, GEC announced last September its intention to purchase 400 million shares in the market for up to £300 million over the coming year. The company proposes to pay no more than either 450p per share or the

average share price for ten days prior to the purchase. Recently, the shares traded at 402p and advanced 3.5 per cent after the announcement. The effect of the buyback will be to reduce outstanding shares by 14 per cent.

Q How do I get money from a share buyback?

A Unfortunately, you will not get money directly from a share buyback. Instead, you benefit

from the growth in the share price.

Q Why will share prices grow from a reduced number of shares?

A The market values a company based on its earnings per share and the growth of earnings. When the company reduces the number of shares outstanding, through a buyback, the effect is to increase the earnings for each share, simply because there

are fewer shares outstanding. This may almost seem like sleight of hand because there is no real change in the company's growth prospects. But investors do consider per share earnings. Even if overall earnings remain the same, the effect of a share buyback is to boost earnings per share, simply because there are fewer shares over which to spread the same earnings.

Another benefit to the company is that it pays out less in dividends. In Legal & General's case, the company was not actually buying back shares. Instead, the company had previously issued bonds which could be converted into shares at a later date.

The company, worried that the additional shares would reduce earnings per share for existing shareholders, decided to buy back these bonds. The bonds in fact paid a higher interest rate, 6 1/2 per cent, than the dividends, 2.7 per cent. David Ruth, Legal & General's finance director, explained that future dividend growth would make the shares more expensive to the company relative to debt in the future.

Q What about special share schemes?

A Schemes employed by Reuters, Northern Ireland Electricity, and BG plc are complicated, driven by the desire to avoid paying unnecessary Advance Corporation Tax (ACT), and can actually put cash in shareholders' pockets.

Rather than paying a one-time special dividend, these companies are replacing existing shares with new ordinary shares and a special kind of share, which can later be redeemed for cash.

These are sometimes called "Class B" shares. Some can be immediately sold back to the company while others trade in the marketplace and can be sold through a stockbroker.

The other spur to a company's seeming benevolence is that some of them have lots of cash in their coffers.

Reuters, for example, has announced a distribution of £1.5 billion of special shares along with a £200 million share buyback.

With only 16 months to go before Personal Equity Plans (PEPs) become consigned to the history books, many are considering whether they should race to invest before these tax-free savings schemes invented by Lord Lawson of Blaby, the former Chancellor, disappear forever.

According to financial advisers, investors appear to have only briefly lost their appetite for Peps in the run up to the announcement of the Individual Savings Account (Isa) last month. The Isa will replace Peps and Tessas (tax exempt savings accounts) as a tax-free savings scheme.

Philip Warland, director general of the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds, said: "Peps continue to hold their attraction for private investors. Unit trust Peps have played a major role in encouraging new investors into the equity and bond markets, and we have to work to ensure that their successor, the Isa, does not damage this trend."

About three million savers hold one or more Peps, and a total of £40 billion has been subscribed to the plans. Under the plans for the Isa, both Peps and Tessas, will be scrapped from April 1999. Pep investors will be able to roll over up to

£50,000 from their Pep investment into the Isa. New Isa investors will be able to invest £5,000 a year tax-free, this compares with the situation at present, where £9,000 a year can be sheltered in a Pep. Isas are also subject to an overall contribution limit of £50,000. As the Isa proposals are by no means final, there has been speculation that the Government is considering raising this limit.

Despite uncertainty, enthusiasm for Peps has not waned. After an unspectacular start ten years ago, when the maximum allowance was a mere £2,400, the amount invested in Peps has risen year on year. Last year investors ploughed in between £6 and £7 billion. Experts forecast similar if not higher figures for 1998 and investment houses are gearing up for a busy period in the months ahead.

Rod Duncan, deputy managing director of Schroders Unit Trusts, said: "It will be a busy Pep season this coming year. I'm not so sure there will be any new Pep investors. But existing Pep

## Will Peps just fade and die?

Susan Emmett and Caroline Merrell look at savings options before the Isa arrives

holders will probably invest again provided they have not already hit the £50,000 ceiling. If there is any shortfall in the numbers of Peps sold it will be due to a lack of new Pep investors." However, new money invested in Peps at Schroders dropped to £10.5 million last December compared with £13 million in November. Pep sales were also slightly down on the same period in 1996.

Mr Duncan played down the decrease and blamed the drop on "high markets and people who don't believe the Government will change the £50,000 limit". He claimed that about 70 per cent of Pep investors at Schroders had already hit the £50,000 ceiling. Keith Civval, managing director of Save & Prosper Direct, is also

optimistic that Peps will make a graceful exit rather than fade away.

"We have got to be quite careful in the industry not to stir up a closing-down sale. Peps are still an important part of tax planning and investors should not miss an opportunity in this tax year or the next. On balance I'm optimistic that people will continue to invest in Peps and we will see levels of sales in balance with last year."

Peps will remain on sale until April 5, 1999. But if you are thinking of buying a Pep, consider the management charges — generally between 5 per cent and 6 per cent initial and 1 per cent to 1.5 per cent annual. There may also be a one-off administration charge of about £30.

However, the last thing the savings industry wants to do during the twilight

years for Peps and Tessas is to discourage new money. Many have already promised not to charge for transferring savings into Isas. But there could be a charge if you change for a different investment or another provider.

According to Ian Millward, investment marketing manager at Chase de Vere, the key is to see through the tax wrapper and look at the investment itself. "Peps and Tessas are still good investments and should continue to be at the heart of a good portfolio," he said.

"But people should not get led by the tax shelter. Ultimately Isas are tax wrappers like Peps. People should forget the wrapper and think about the investment behind it. Investment trusts and unit trusts are sensible anyway and if you pick a low-yielding high-growth trust you will be paying little tax on dividends."

Tessas could be even more attractive as they can be held to maturity. While Tessas will no longer be on sale from April 1999, holders will be able to

continue to pay into their accounts for the full five years and then move the capital into an Isa.

The interest accumulated in the account cannot be transferred and when a transfer is made, it counts towards the £50,000 lifetime limit on Isa contributions. About 4.5 million people hold £26 billion in Tessas. Present rules allow each saver to start a Tessas with £3,000. The amount saved can be increased by £1,800 a year in the second, third and fourth year and to £600 in the final year until the total hits £9,000.

While Pep sales will end in April, existing Pep investors have until October 6, 1999 to transfer their holdings into an Isa. Under the proposals, these will combine cash savings with investments in stocks and shares including investment and unit trusts, life insurance and National Savings products. A total of £1,000 a year can be saved in cash, another £1,000 in life insurance products and the rest in equity-linked schemes.

Unlike Tessas, savers will be able to withdraw money from their Isas at any time. The start of the year is usually marked by the start of the advertising blitz to attract millions of pounds into Peps. In spite of the short-term life

Continued on page 54

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# King's ransom goes cheap

History rarely repeats itself exactly. In 1531, a band of Spanish speculators led by Francisco Pizarro seized Atahualpa, the Great Inca, during a meeting of pretended friendship, and held him to ransom for a half-ton of gold jewellery, supplied by the people of the Inca empire and melted down by the speculators. They murdered Atahualpa anyway.

This week, sad-faced citizens have brought in their jewellery and bits and pieces of gold from all over South Korea, filling Seoul banking halls with about 17 tonnes of the metal. It is destined to be melted down to pay a ransom to modern speculators, who have been selling wares by the lorryload and thereby threaten to force the whole country into default. Better not push the analogy further.

Those Korean citizens helped to propel the dollar price of gold to its lowest for 18 years. The sterling price of kruggerands, though less frenetic, is back to the lows it touched in the recessions at the start of the 1980s and 1990s. Meantime, speculators have had several chances to profit there. But over a 20-year period, gold has been a poor investment. Since the price spikes of the early 1980s, its value has not matched money, let alone inflation.

Back in Korea, the story is different. Those who kept some of their wealth in gold rather than won deposits or won-denominated securities now look smart, even if their reward is patriotic rather



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than financial. And Korea is more representative of the market for gold than the remaining gold-bugs of the West.

By conventional wisdom, gold is a hedge against money inflation. If you believe that the developed world has tamed inflation for the foreseeable future, there is no point holding gold. It has no special value beyond that of a commodity mined largely to be made into jewellery and watches.

Gold is even inferior to money deposits because it earns no interest return. But it is not merely a hedge against inflation. It is a store of value against all sorts of other upsets: devaluation, revolution, war. Sailors once wore a gold earring to ensure a decent funeral abroad. In 1997, Swiss tourists murdered in the Luxor massacre carried gold as the best currency to buy artefacts

in Egypt. Jewellery-loving Indians, who know about being expelled from their land, are the world's top buyers of gold.

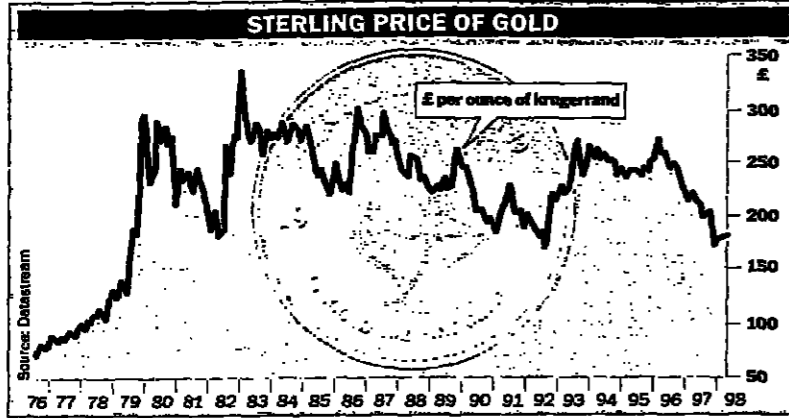
Only the arrogant central bankers of the West can afford to write gold off as just another commodity. Yet their actions stop gold being a buoyant commodity market. In 1997, according to new figures from Gold Fields Mineral Services, more than 3,200 tonnes of gold were used to make jewellery alone. 235 tonnes more than total mine output plus scrap. Prices should have been buoyant, especially if cash-strapped mine owners had not sold forward.

Central banks, under the influence of Washington, pushed the price down in Western currencies by selling 393 tonnes from reserves, up from 239 tonnes in 1996. Even heavier sales, notably from Switzerland, are in the pipeline and the creation of a modern-minded European Central Bank is expected to bring big net sales from national reserves.

The Asian crash could have a contrary effect. Once the dust settles, gold may well be used to back currencies that are bound to remain rocky for many years. Just as gold helped French governments to raise bonds when the franc was dodgy, Asian governments may find that it saves them a lot of interest to issue bonds backed by gold reserves.

Central banks can earn some interest, albeit only about 1/2 per cent a year, by lending gold reserves to London's wholesale gold market. In Thailand, the Government has started borrowing gold from the country's myriad traders in exchange for interest-bearing certificates. Such practices, if they spread, would remove the chief drawback of gold as money.

When sentiment changes, gold will repay short-term speculation as it did in 1986 or 1992-93. In the medium-term, prices should also benefit from consolidation of South African mines into groups that can manage production better. That should provide investment opportunities. Those with stable home currencies, governments and borders have little call to invest permanently in the metal. That is best left to those who truly need the security of gold.



# Pension breakers



The average career break for women starts at 26 and lasts for six and a half years. The effect on a pension can be devastating

## There are ways to limit damage to the pension fund when a job is lost, says Helen Pridham

Jobs are rarely for life nowadays. Having a series of jobs has become the norm. They may not always follow on neatly one after the other and increasingly men and women alike experience one or more periods of unemployment.

Such breaks in employment can play havoc with pension provision. Most pension arrangements are designed to provide the best results over the long term. Stopping contributions for any period, or switching between different types of schemes can severely reduce prospective retirement income, especially if you have left it rather late to start your pension in the first place.

Moreover, under current rules, you cannot contribute to a pension when you are not working, even if you have money available.

Tony Filbin, head of pensions at Legal & General, the insurance company, said: "Pension contributions can only be made in relation to earned income at present, although we are hoping that the Government will drop this restriction when its review of pensions is completed."

Highclere Financial Services, independent financial adviser, shows that you can be severely penalised if you stop paying into your pension policy.

Apart from looking at charges, he advises: "Make sure you take out a personal pension plan which will give you a 'paid up' value at any time. There are still some policies which stipulate that you must have contributed for a minimum period of, say, 12 months or built up a fund of £500 or £1,000. If you stop contributions any earlier, such policies become valueless."

theory, if you have a personal pension, you will also have to stop your contributions when you stop working.

However, Ian Forster, marketing manager of Scottish Life, points out: "You may actually be able to go on contributing to your plan for up to two years by carrying back your contributions to previous tax years, assuming you did not pay the maximum permitted during those periods."

Also, consider other forms of tax efficient saving if you have spare cash available. You may be able to use this to boost your pension when you get back to work.

### ON YOUR RETURN

You will need to carry out a thorough reassessment of your pension position when you return to work and look at ways in which you can make up for the years of missed contributions. Much will depend on whether or not your new employer provides a pension scheme and what type it is. It is a good idea to take independent financial advice.

If your employer offers a company pension scheme, you should consider making additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) to boost your final benefits. If you were previously a member of a scheme, you may also consider taking a transfer value from your old scheme and to buy benefits in your new scheme. Again, take professional advice first.

### DURING BREAK

Try to make sure your national insurance (NI) record is maintained when you are not working, otherwise you could end up with a reduced basic state pension at retirement.

NI credits are normally given to anyone registering as unemployed and claiming job-seeker's allowance (as unemployment benefit is now known). After 26 weeks, job-seeker's allowance is means tested. If you do not qualify for the allowance, you can still receive NI credits, providing you continue to register as unemployed.

### BEFORE BREAK

The prospect of a break in employment strengthens the argument for joining a pension scheme or starting a personal pension as young as possible so that you already have some pension provision building up. Women in particular should try to save as much as they can during the early years of their careers, often the time when they have the most spare income available.

If you are not offered membership of a company pension scheme and are setting up your own personal pension plan, you must be careful to select a plan that will accommodate changes in your personal circumstances. Although most plans nowadays claim to be all-singing-all-dancing, a survey compiled for Money Management magazine by Alan Lakey, of

You will also receive credits when undertaking a government approved training course, but not if you simply decide to return to college yourself.

People who stay at home to look after young children or dependent relatives should also qualify for home responsibilities protection (HRP). This effectively reduces the number of qualifying years you would otherwise need for a full pension.

If you belonged to a company pension scheme, your membership will end when you leave the company's employment. You have several options regarding the benefits you have built up in the scheme. Do not rush into anything; it is better to wait until you get another job before making a decision. In

If no pension scheme is on offer, you will need to start a personal pension plan, or restart your old one. Check out the terms and review your company's performance, as you may find another provider can now offer you a better deal. Remember, if you restructure your old plan you will need to save more than you were doing previously to end up with the same level of pension fund.

Legal & General points out that a woman taking a typical career break, for example, would have to almost double her payments to her pension plan to have the same pension she would have had without the break.

Finally, check your national insurance position. Even if you were entitled to credits, it is not a bad idea to make sure that you have been correctly credited by asking for a pension forecast. You can get a request form, BR19, from your local DSS office.

If you have taken time out for college, consider paying voluntary NI contributions.

## Will Peps just fade away?

Continued from page 53

expectancy for Peps, independent financial advisers report that investors are not racing to purchase Peps while stocks last.

Investors appear to be wary about taking the plunge because they fear that the product providers will start to impose transfer penalties when it comes to switching Peps into Isas. Very few companies have actually pledged to transfer Peps holdings into Isas free of charge.

Graham Hooper, of Chase de Vere, the financial adviser, believes that those who routinely make Peps investments should continue to do so. He said charges on many plans were much lower than those on the unit trust or investment trust equivalents.

He said: "One of the Peps I favour is Fidelity's triple performance Peps, which is 50 per cent invested in UK special situations, 25 per cent in Europe and 25 per cent in US special situations."

"The strength of sterling favours the international diversification of the Peps. European investment could be favoured as we move towards convergence. US special situations still have value. The initial charge on the fund is

low at 3.5 per cent, and the annual charge is 1.5 per cent."

Mr Hooper said that changes announced by the Government on tax relief on share dividends generated within equity-based Peps will make these schemes less attractive for those wishing for high levels of income.

When Isas are introduced next year the amount of advanced corporation tax that can be claimed on UK dividends will be cut from 20 per cent to 10 per cent for the first five years of the scheme. The change will apply to investments transferred from Peps to Isas.

He added: "If you are looking for income, it might be better to invest in a corporate bond Peps. The income paid out on most corporate bond Peps is treated as interest and will not shrink as a result of the change to Act. Only those corporate bond Peps that hold preference shares will be hit by the new rule. He recommends Commercial Union's monthly income Peps for those looking for high levels of monthly income."

Charles Levett-Scrivenor, of Towry Law, financial advisers, believes that even invest-

tors who are close to or over the £50,000 Isa limit should consider Peps investment. He said: "They should do this for a few reasons. First of all, they benefit from 18 months of tax-free income and capital gains. Secondly, Peps are lower-cost than funds themselves and thirdly, the £50,000 limit might be changed."

He believes that Peps investors should consider Peps this year. He recommends Perpetual's worldwide Peps for income investors and Save & Prosper's extra income Peps. For those who are interested in investing in UK companies, Mr Levett-Scrivenor recommends funds from Credit Suisse, Perpetual and M&G.

Over the past year this latter fund manager has not performed well, but he thinks that the recovery in the share prices of smaller companies, expected this year, will benefit M&G's funds.

John Holder, of Chelsea Financial Services, said that he felt that investors were being put off Peps because of the uncertainty over Isas. He said: "For monthly income investors, we recommend Commercial Union's Peps." He also favours Jupiter Peps, particularly the European.

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# New banks step up the interest

Britain's building societies and banks are coming under increasing pressure to raise the interest rates they pay to savers after the influx of new banks offering higher returns.

In the past 12 months Sainsbury's Bank, Tesco, Prudential Bank, Virgin and Standard Life Bank have all jumped on the bandwagon.

Almost without exception the new players are household names which hope and expect to gain immediate market share because people feel comfortable dealing with them, irrespective of their lack of track record in the financial services sector.

Although critics accuse the newcomers of buying business by offering market-leading rates to savers and in some cases to borrowers, the banking market has never offered as much choice.

Standard Life, the mutual life insurance company, is the latest to enter the savings account sector after launching its direct access savings account on Monday. It pays a market-leading rate of 6.76 per cent for a minimum deposit of just £1, rising to a top rate of 7.3 per cent for balances over £50,000.

The account was launched in December for Standard Life staff. After 2,500 employees poured more than £6.5 million into the new scheme, Europe's largest mutual insurer decided to extend the facility to the general public.

Around £50 million was ploughed into the new savings account as thousands of savers were attracted by the high rate paid by the new telephone-based account — 6.76 per cent on balances of as little as £1. Some of the money was switched from Tesco and Sainsbury accounts.

The account was launched with the aim of retaining revenue from maturing endowments and pensions. Standard Life, which has more than four million policyholders and assets worth over

£56 billion, currently pays out £911 million a year to customers with maturing endowments and £500 million in pensions.

Iain Lumsden, group finance director at Standard Life, believes savers were attracted by the competitive rate rather than the principal of mutuality, but that a strong company performance is the best way of safeguarding their mutual status.

"I hope that mutuality has come to be appreciated and that it will flourish in the future," he said.

The group also plans to launch fixed-term savings accounts, personal loans and mortgages.

Standard Life's move into the savings market comes almost a year after Sainsbury's became the first supermarket chain to introduce its own bank with an instant access account paying 6.5 per cent, irrespective of the amount deposited.

Tesco followed in September, matching Sainsbury's 6.5 per cent gross interest with its instant access account.

Prudential jumped on the bandwagon a month later, with its new banking arm offering 3.8 per cent on a minimum balance of £500, rising to 5.2 per cent on amounts of more than £50,000. Direct Line, the telephone-based general insurer,

is also offering an instant savings account. It pays 5.8 per cent for the minimum £1 deposit up to 7.25 per cent for balances of £100,000 or more.

Part of the reason why the new players can offer such attractive rates is that, unlike the big banks and building societies, they do not have expensive branch networks to maintain.

Most run their savings accounts through a postal system, while others use their well established network of supermarket branches to accept deposits and administer withdrawals.

Among the more established institutions, Halifax pays a paltry 0.5 per cent on its instant access card cash account, regardless of the balance. Its Liquid Gold savings account also pays 0.5 per cent on balances under £500, rising sharply to 4 per cent on amounts above this to a maximum of 4.65 per cent on balances of more than £25,000.

Barclays Bank is only slightly more generous, paying 0.75 per cent on balances of more than £100, increasing to 3.65 per cent over £500.

For savers, Prudential Bank offers personal loans of up to £12,000, with the lowest rate being a highly competitive 11.7 per cent. Sainsbury's, which runs its financial services business in partnership with Bank of Scotland, charges its personal loans at a typical APR of 12 per cent.

Lloyds Bank changes a top rate of 21.9 per cent for unsecured personal loans under £1,500, although this does reduce for larger loans to its best rate of 13.8 per cent for more than £10,000.

Sainsbury's and Tesco also offer credit cards charged at 18.5 per cent and 16.9 per cent respectively, compared with Barclaycard Visa, which charges an APR of 22.9 per cent and a £10 annual fee.

JOHN GIVENS AND SUSAN EMMETT

### Patrick Collinson on a proposal to standardise mortgage indemnity policies

# Switch to cashback covers shock charge

With nine-month-old baby Emily and just a cramped two-bedroom flat, Samantha Durrant, a Kingston Hospital planning manager, and her husband, Adrian, knew it was time to move. They saved hard for a £6,000 deposit on their new home, a £108,000 semi in Addlestone, Surrey. But they were horrified when Woolwich, their lender, said they would have to pay a £1,000 mortgage indemnity guarantee.

"We were already mortgaged to the hilt and beyond and to have to pay even more was a bit of a shock. Because of the size of the mortgage Woolwich refused to let us add the Mig to the loan."

The Durrants finally got the keys to their new home just one week before Christmas, but only after deciding to take out a cashback mortgage to pay off the Mig.



# Lenders' sting in the tail for the first-time buyer

The cost of a Mig on a £50,000 95% mortgage

LENDER	COST
Abbey National	£1,052.64
Bristol & West	£789
Bradford & Bingley	£905.23
Cheltenham & Gloucs.	£0.00
Halifax	£762
Leeds & Holbeck	£943
NatWest	£768.40
Nationwide	£774*
Northern Rock	£942.17
Skipton	£850
Woolwich	£910.50

Source: Clark Conway  
\*Charged as increased interest rate over first 36 months

First-time buyers find it difficult enough to scrape together the cash for a deposit on their first home. But few are prepared for the sting in the tail from £1,000-plus fees demanded by lenders to guarantee the mortgage.

A survey published this week by Clark Conway, the London mortgage broker, reveals not just the high cost of the guarantees, but also how fees vary widely between lenders, with some charging first-time buyers 50 per cent more than others.

Clark Conway found that a borrower taking a £50,000 mortgage from Abbey National, but only able to afford a 5 per cent deposit, is hit with a mortgage indemnity guarantee (Mig) bill of £1,052.64.

If the same borrower had gone to Halifax for a similar mortgage, the bill would be only £762. Not that Halifax is the most virtuous. In 1994 Cheltenham & Gloucester, now part of the Lloyds Bank group, abandoned Mig's altogether, but unfortunately few other lenders have followed suit.

Migs are required by a lender if a homebuyer needs a mortgage worth more than 75 per cent of the value of the

home. They are intended as an insurance policy to protect the lender against a loss if the buyer falls into arrears and the property has to be repossessed. Even though the policy is charged to the homebuyer, it is only the lender that benefits.

Many lenders allow borrowers to add the Mig to the cost of the loan, but this can mean paying 25 years of interest on the premium, and mortgage brokers say it allows lenders to pass on the cost too

have not cut Mig premiums.

Alistair Conway, Clark Conway managing director who carried out the survey, said: "The whole process of house purchase is very stressful for most people, and then you have to tell them they have to add on the cost of stamp duty and the Mig, often totalling £3,000. You have to try to justify it to a housebuyer when in reality it can't be justified."

When Andrew Pople, managing director of Abbey National's branch network, was challenged to justify the level of the Mig, he said: "Abbey National is constantly reviewing Mig premiums. Although the UK housing market has revived since the early Nineties, this has primarily been in the South East, and our experience shows that this is not the case across the country."

"Our reviews of the Mig premium take into account the amount of risk and mortgage arrears across the whole of the UK and are not calculated on a

regional basis. We are not alone in charging Mig premiums and most lenders still require Mig premiums to be paid when considering high percentage loans." However, when C&G abolished its Mig, it said: "Why should a customer pay for a policy that benefits the lender? Just as we are able to absorb the cost of not charging application or valuation fees, we apply the same principle to Migs. And our customers benefit."

Unlike other insurance policies, the housebuyer cannot shop around for a low-price Mig, because the Mig is a contract between the lender and the insurance company.

But Mr Conway believes there is a way around the problem. He is contacting insurance providers in an attempt to produce a policy with standard definitions acceptable to lenders that can be bought individually and then assigned to the lender. "If Migs were opened up as a proper market, I'm sure people would end up paying less. It's effectively a monopoly situation and I want to see the lenders pressured into improving the situation. Ultimately, however, I think Migs should be scrapped."

**A broker believes Migs should be opened up as a proper market**

The fee is worked out as a proportion (typically 6-8 per cent) of the difference between the 75 per cent level of the loan and the purchase price.

The average fee jumped sharply in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the property slump left lenders with hundreds of thousands of repossessed properties on their hands. But in spite of the property price recovery and the fact that repossessions are less than half the rate of 1991, lenders apart from C&G,

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# First aim of the game is to be well insured

Richard Branson has not yet got his latest round-the-world ballooning attempt off the ground, but his insurers may already be feeling nervous.

One delayed start, one runway balloon and all the cost involved in trekking across bits of Africa to recapture it, not to mention setting up another launch attempt, will have topped up a tidy sum.

For more ordinary folk attempting to whizz around the world in a balloon is an unlikely pastime. While such ambitions are beyond the financial reach of most, there is an increasing range of activities open to the energetic amateur - bungee jumping, kayaking, heliskiing, paragliding, scuba diving and abseiling among them.

Developments in the insurance market, with the launch of specialist sports policies, reflect the increased participation in more unusual sports and activities in the UK or as part of overseas holidays.

SportsCover Direct in Bristol is one company catering for such enthusiasts. It offers Venture Card with insurers Independent Insurance, which classifies sports into four groups ranging from hang gliding and paragliding (high risk) through to lower-risk activities such as squash, aerobics, mountain biking and archery.

Premiums are graded according to the sport classification, the countries visited and the level of cover required. For example, annual cover for sports in group two, which includes snowboarding, horse riding and climbing, would cost from £68 and cover activities in the UK and much of Europe.

The benefits include personal accident costs of £20,000 for the highest level of cover and personal liability cover of up to £3 million. Other features include medical expenses, hospital benefits and costs for any search and rescue charges incurred.

What about more normal sports? Rugby, football and cricket top the injury league table and while you may not be Alan Shearer, if you sprain an ankle in a friendly fixture and have to take time off work or pay for medical treatment it could be costly, particularly for the self-employed.

Alternatively, if an over-thusiasmatic swing at the 14th

Whatever the sport or activity, coverage gives peace of mind, says Clare Stewart



Alan Shearer appreciates the value of sports insurance

hole results in your breaking the jaw of a fellow player, you might find yourself facing a hefty bill for damages. Personal accident cover, personal liability insurance and cover for items of sports equipment need to be considered.

A typical home and contents policy can provide an element of personal liability insurance and cover for equipment. However, it will not provide any financial assistance if you are off work with a temporary or even longer-term injury.

Personal accident cover, which pays out either a weekly sum if you are temporarily off work, or may provide a

cash lump sum in the event of more serious disablement, is one option. Royal and SunAlliance, for example, quotes an average monthly premium of £11 for personal accident insurance that pays up to £110,000 in the event of serious injury. Permanent health insurance will also provide some income if you are unable to work.

Personal cover is also available through membership of a sports club or body. The British Mountaineering Council offers inclusive cover for its members as part of their annual subscription. This includes personal liability cover up to £2 million and

personal accident insurance up to £100,000 in the event of serious disablement.

The Ski Club of Great Britain has recently launched a new insurance package for its members through IDS, the brokers. The cover includes activities such as off-piste skiing, likely to be excluded from more general policies offered by your operators.

Benefits include personal liability up to £2 million with a maximum payout for serious injury or disablement of £10,000. For a ten-day trip the premium is £27 for Ski Club members, as against £39 for non-members.

It pays to shop about, both to compare rates and to look at what is being offered by way of cover. A general travel policy may limit, or even exclude, participation in winter sports. You should ensure that the level of benefits offered meet your needs.

For more comprehensive cover, or for more unusual sports with different risks attached, it is worthwhile talking to a broker for a tailored package.

Medical expenses are likely to be amongst the highest element of your costs, says David Stirling from Crispin Stevens, the Lloyd's broker. Particularly if your sporting activities involve travelling abroad to remote areas. He points out that private medical cover alone is unlikely to be adequate.

Remember also the hefty costs you might incur if you need to call on search and rescue services while abroad. There may also be circumstances where you cannot find an off-the-shelf insurance package to cover your specific risk.

For example, says Mr Stirling, if you pay dearly to join the crew of a yacht in a round-the-world race in two or three years time, your initial exposure could be the cancellation of the race, or your decision for family or other reasons to pull out.

Contact a local insurance broker for tailored cover, or the British Insurance and Investment Brokers Association on 0171 623 9043 for information on specialists.

Ski Club of Great Britain - 01403 225 303 (for details of insurance). SportsCover Direct - 0117 922 6222.

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## John Givens with some cautionary thoughts and options on company cars

### Consultant preferred deferred



John Slade, a self-employed consultant, had an early Christmas present on December 24 when he picked up his new company car with the help of Alliance & Leicester's Car Purchase Plan. The scheme allowed John, 47, who specialises in quality management and health and safety consultancy, to finance the purchase of a new Mazda 626, with half the £15,000 loan deferred until the end of the two-year term. With interest at an annual 12.7 per cent, the Epsom businessman pays £428.90 a month for two years, with a final payment of £7,500. Unlike leasing or personal contracts, this plan allows buyers to own vehicles at once and to sell them when they like.

John, who is married with four children, said this was the best scheme for him. "I looked at ways to buy a new car without tying up too much capital and the A&L scheme allowed me to defer 50 per cent of the cost with the flexibility I wanted," he said. "I liked the idea of owning the car straight away so I'm in control and can sell it at any time, or even keep it beyond the original term by continuing the payments."

## GO IT ALONE

# Gear up the office transport to needs

If your business requires you to have a car or van you have a number of options for financing what will be one of the most expensive purchases your new venture will make.

Before you go out and snap up the latest BMW or Mercedes on the market, you should first consider how much your business will be relying on a company vehicle.

If all you need is a car to get to occasional appointments, rather than to play an integral role in the day-to-day running of the business, then you should try to resist the temptation to spend lots of money on an expensive model.

Otherwise, you can buy for cash, finance the purchase, lease the vehicle, or hire it.

**Lease/contract hire**

When you lease a vehicle you are effectively renting it from a motor dealership or fleet management company.

You pay a monthly rental for a term agreed at the outset, usually two or three years, and this gives you the right to use the vehicle for both private and business use.

At the end of the lease term the car is returned to the supplier, so you can never technically own it. There are schemes that allow you to keep on leasing the vehicle after the original agreement comes to an end for a much reduced monthly payment, known as a peppercorn rental.

Most lease deals include full servicing, maintenance and road tax, so if your car needs a new set of tyres, or the exhaust replacing, it is the lease company that foots the bill. Insuring the vehicle is your responsibility.

Leasing is a relatively expensive but hassle-free way of financing your company vehicle, although sorting out an agreement is not always easy if you are a new company.

**Buying for cash**

The easiest way to finance the purchase of a vehicle is to pay cash. This way you will save your business the interest you would be charged if you decided to borrow the money.

However, if you are buying for cash make sure that your cashflow can cope with the outlay before you go ahead.

If the purchase is likely to cause you cashflow problems it might be better for you to consider borrowing the money or leasing the car, so that you can spread the payments over a period of time.

**Borrowing the money**

Most people acquiring a company vehicle borrow the money from a bank or other source. This will mean paying interest on the capital, so it is important that you shop around for the lowest rate.

There is a surprising difference in the rates payable, even among the major high street banks and building societies, so shopping around could save you hundreds of pounds over the term of the loan.

For example, a £5,000 unsecured personal loan repayable over three years costs £168.45 a month with First Direct, whereas the same loan from Barclays Bank costs £177.64 a month, a difference over the 36 months of £30.84.

The Cheshire Building Society will charge you £186.07 a month, £634.32 more than First Direct.

**Personal contracts**

Similar to leasing, but only part of the value of the vehicle is financed, with the remainder payable at the end of the term. For example, on a car worth £10,000 you might defer £4,000—known as a residual value—and pay the remaining £6,000 over a prearranged term, say 36 months.

At the end of the three years you must pay the £4,000 to take ownership of the vehicle, or simply hand the car back to the dealer and have nothing else to pay.

Alliance & Leicester has introduced an alternative, which allows more flexibility and does not tie the owner into the dealership. It works like a personal loan, although up to 60 per cent of the amount

**Hiring a car**

This might sound like an expensive option, but if you only need a vehicle occasionally—perhaps two or three times a month—then hiring a car on a daily basis might turn out to be cheaper than owning one.

Hertz, one of Britain's biggest car rental organisations, charges £56 a day to hire a medium-sized car like a Ford Mondeo or Vauxhall Vectra, and £191 for a full week's rental. The fully inclusive deal covers the cost of the vehicle rental and includes insurance and breakdown assistance as well as unlimited mileage. All you need to do is pay for petrol.

In the July Budget, the Chancellor announced that tax exempt savings schemes will change in April 1999. As a result you may not be able to continue to enjoy the current tax benefits offered by a PEP. However, the Government has announced that a new tax privileged vehicle is to be introduced—the Individual Savings Accounts or ISA for short. Full details have yet to be confirmed and we are currently in discussion with the Government as to the future implications for PEPs. The price of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up, you may not get back as much as you invest. The value of the benefits will depend on your own circumstances. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. M&G do not offer investment advice or make any recommendations regarding investments—we only promote the packaged products and services of the M&G marketing group. (Source: Micropol UK Fixed Interest sector.)

\*The difference between the buying and selling price of units in the M&G Blue Chip Fund was 0.5% as at 2 January 1998, 0.55% for The M&G Managed Income Fund and 0.65% for The M&G Corporate Bond Fund as at 26th December 1997. Issued by M&G Financial Services Limited (Regulated by The Personal Investment Authority). Registered Office: M&G House, Victoria Road, Cheltenham CM1 1FB. M&G Unit Trusts are managed by M&G Securities Limited (Regulated by DMO) and The Personal Investment Authority.

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# Bonuses take a knock

### Tax changes and deflation will affect endowment annual payouts, reports Marianne Curphey

With-profits life and pensions policyholders were given warning this week that the annual bonus rates on their endowments were likely to fall over the long term.

As insurance companies began declaring their annual bonuses, the first three to do so announced cuts in annual bonus rates and some cuts in final bonuses.

This was despite booming stock markets in 1996 and 1997 in the UK and US, regions which make up the bulk of the investment portfolios of UK insurers. There was some good news for holders of 10 and 25 year endowment plans: their maturity (or terminal) bonuses have been increased slightly.

General Accident, Norwich Union and Friends Provident all predicted that the annual bonuses were likely to continue to decline over the long term. The latter are declared yearly and once paid out cannot be taken away. They are guaranteed and provide the smoothed return which is so attractive to policyholders who are keen to receive steady growth despite turbulence in the stock markets.

The insurers say the decline in annual bonuses has come as a result of changes to the way companies are taxed. In addition, they claim economic

and monetary union (EMU) will mean interest rates and inflation are likely to stay low, with a knock-on effect on returns for UK investors.

Mike Urmston, chief actuary of General Accident Life, said: "The economic conditions of the past few years are characterised by low inflation, low interest rates, and as a consequence, falling yields on gilts and fixed interest securities. This situation looks set to continue, especially if the UK joins EMU."

Critics have suggested that weighting payouts towards the end of the policy's life will adversely affect policyholders who cash in their plans early. They also claim that placing a greater emphasis on maturity bonuses will allow insurers to be even more opaque about their investment returns.

The insurers have attempted to allay the fears of investors on these two points. James Duffell, a spokesman for Norwich Union, said: "If someone surrenders their policy early we would give them a proportion of the terminal bonus they have earned. If you cash in your plan one year short of its 25-year term, you will get a

generous proportion of the final bonus." General Accident said that a greater emphasis on terminal bonuses meant it was "essential" for life companies to provide better information to their policyholders.

Investors could be forgiven for wondering why, after two years of strong stock market growth, the insurers feel justified in reducing annual bonuses. At the end of each year, insurers' actuaries calculate how much of the investment returns can be paid out to investors, and how much needs to be kept back in case of lean years. Insurers have been more cautious since the heady days of the 1980s, when a number, buoyed by the rising stock markets, overpaid.

However, there have also been criticisms of the whole system of declaring maturity bonuses. Critics say it is easy for insurers who have only a few policies maturing in a year to pay out large bonuses in order to ensure that they get to the top of the financial performance league tables.

Charles Levett-Servener, a consultant with the accountant

company with a quotation from an endowment market-maker.

The average savings rate from a building society is around 4 per cent, compared with the annual bonuses being declared by life companies of around 6 per cent. However, some supermarkets are offering very high short-term savings rates of 6.5 per cent.

Norwich Union unveiled its bonuses this week and will be paying out a record £920 million in maturity bonuses to over 53,000 policyholders in 1998. However, it will be cutting annual bonus rates.

Richard Harvey, NU's chief executive, said: "Our view of the long-term investment outlook has led us to reconsider the level of annual bonus payable."

For an existing NI unitised policy, annual bonus rates on savings products have been reduced from 6.5 per cent last year to 6 per cent this year. On pensions products, the rate has come down from 7.5 per cent to 6.75 per cent.

For conventional bonuses, the yield on a ten-year endowment maturing this year has risen from 9.4 per cent to 10 per cent. An investor would receive £10,063, almost £300 more than last year. On a 25-year endowment the payout has risen by £7,000 to a total of £100,000.

Brian Goldstein, managing director of Policy Portfolio, which trades with-profit endowment policies, said: "News that annual bonuses are declining means that every year people can expect to receive less than they might have got. If they intend to cash in their policies they need to be more careful that they get the best possible price and should compare the surrender value they are offered by the insurance



Heady days of the Eighties, when rising stocks tempted some insurers to overpay

**BONUS TERMS EXPLAINED**

THE payout under a conventional with-profits policy is made up of three elements: the guaranteed benefit, annual bonus and additional bonus.

- Guaranteed benefit-sum insured:** the amount payable at the date of the claim (either on maturity or earlier death). Bonuses are added to this amount over the term of the policy to make up the final payment.
- Annual bonus-reversionary bonus:** the amount added by the insurer to a with-profits policy each year. Life companies tend to quote these in percentage terms that apply to the guaranteed benefit and a further percentage applying to the bonus already added in previous years.
- Additional bonus-terminal bonus:** At the end of the policy's life, or when the policyholder dies before it matures, the amount of bonuses already paid is compared with the policy's total earnings over the term. The balance is paid as a terminal bonus.
- Unitised policies:** with-profits policies of a different nature. More of this type have been sold in recent years. The policyholder's contributions buy units in the with-profits fund and the unit price increases as the annual bonus is added on a daily basis. The payout for a unitised with-profits policy is made up of two elements: the value of units held, which is self-explanatory, and the additional bonus. For the latter, at the date of claim the value of the units is compared with the total earnings of the policy. Any balance is made up by the declaration of an additional bonus.

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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Nationwide offers football account

Football fanatics may be interested in an account designed specifically for followers of the sport. Nationwide Building Society, sponsors of the Nationwide Football League, has launched a Football '98 Account that pays a return of 5 per cent per annum.

Nationwide has also announced an increase in its savings rates by up to 0.3 per cent, with effect from January 16. The building society has pledged to hold its standard variable mortgage rate at 8.1 per cent at least until there is another increase in base rates.

Although Policy Portfolio never encourages endowment policyholders to sell, it does recognise that security of employment is a thing of the past and that if someone is made redundant, and needs the cash, every effort should be made to ensure that the best price for the policy is obtained. A leaflet, Made Redundant, Cashing in Your Endowment - How to Get More, is available free from Policy Portfolio. Call 0181-343 4567 for a copy.

Abbey National is re-launching its Choices Bond and Stepped Bond on Monday.

To help with tax planning in 1998, Moore Stephens, the accountant, has produced a concise guide suitable for both individuals and businesses. The free booklet suggests what tax planning could be done before the end of the tax year on April 5 and provides guidance for the rest of the year. Call 01483 538831.

Child support jobseeker's allowance, mortgage shortfall debts and student debts are just a few of the issues covered in the Debt Advice Handbook. Updated for 1998, the guide offers comprehensive and detailed information, invaluable for any adviser counselling on debt problems. For a copy, send a cheque for £10.95 (including p&P) made payable to Child Poverty Action Group Ltd, 15 Bath Street, London EC1V 9PY.

LIZANNE ROSE

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at January 8, 1998

Table with columns: Investment (£), Company, Standard Rate (%). Rows include 1 Year, 2 Years, 3 Years, 4 Years, 5 Years with various providers like Hambro Assured, GE Fin Assur, etc.

Source: Chamberlain de Broe 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Includes Woolwich 0800 222200, C&G 0800 742437, etc.

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS

Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Includes Bristol & West 0800 202121, Legal & General Bank 0500 111200, etc.

Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Includes First TESSAS (TAX FREE), Melton Mowray BS 0800 713 7385, etc.

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

Table with columns: Card type, Interest per month, APR%, Fee per annum. Includes Capital One Bank 0800 689000, RBS Advanta 0800 077770, etc.

PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

Table with columns: Personal Loans, APR, Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs with insurance, no insurance. Includes Northern Rock BS 0345 421421, Direct Line 0181 680 9966, etc.

NS, A = Minimum age 22 years, B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System, C = no interest free period, F = Fixed Rate, all other rates variable, H = If insurance not arranged APR 12.7 per cent, N = Introductory rates for a limited period, OM = Interest paid on maturity, P = By Post only

\* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

Source: Moneyfacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01822 900 677)

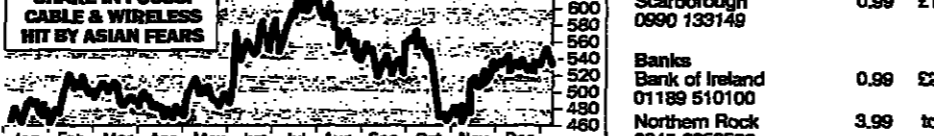
PIBS

Table with columns: FIXED RATE, Gross coupon, Buying price, Gross yield, Issue price, Minimum purchase amount. Includes Birmingham Midlands 9.375%, Bradford & Bingley 11.625%, etc.

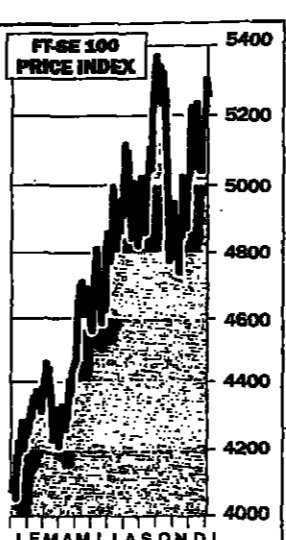
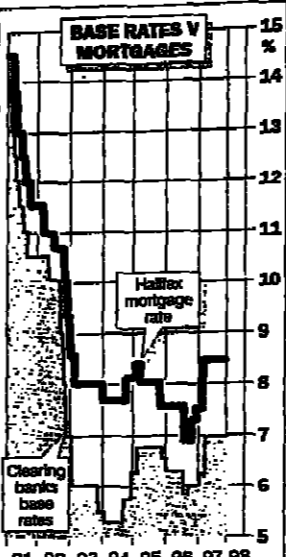
PERPETUAL SUBORDINATED BONDS

Table with columns: Chelt & Gloucester 11.750%, Halifax 8.750%, Halifax 12.000%, Halifax 13.600%, Bristol & West 13.800%, Northern Rock 12.625%

PIBS=Permanent Interest-bearing shares. Source: NatWest Markets



Source: Chamberlain de Broe 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.



NATIONAL SAVINGS

Table with columns: Gross rate, At tax rates 20%, 40%, Minimum investment £, Notice, Contact. Includes Ordinary A/c, Investment A/c, Income Bond, etc.

\* First £70 (£140) of net tax free, incl. accs for up to £100 - Unlimited additional savings for reinvested proceeds. \* Tax free - Rates gross of income tax. See separate leaflet for details of rates and conditions. \*\* Rates apply to investments of £1,000 or more. \*\*\* Rates apply to investments of £1,000 or more.

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£10,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

Table with columns: SINGLE LIFE (level ann), Male: Age 60, Age 65, Age 70; SINGLE LIFE (level ann), Female: Age 60, Age 65, Age 70; JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity), Male: Age 60, Age 65, Age 70; JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity), Female: Age 60, Age 65, Age 70

Source: Annuity Direct (0171 684 5000)

Statistics compiled by Lizanne Rose

LARGER LENDERS

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate %, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies, Chelsea, Bradford & Bingley, etc.

LARGER LOANS

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate %, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies, Notingham Imper, Leeds & Holbeck, etc.

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate %, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies, Newbury, Mansfield, etc.

Larger lenders, base and first-time buyers tables by Buy's Guide Ltd (01733 880482)

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UNIT-LINKED INVESTMENT

Large table listing various unit-linked investment funds across multiple columns, including ASBON LIFE ASSURANCE, ARBEY LIFE, BLACK HORSE LIFE, BRITANNIA, CANADIAN LIFE, etc.

Vertical advertisements on the right edge of the page, including 'WEEKEND MONEY', 'Plans unfair', 'WANTED', 'SUNNING BATES', 'DIRECT', 'PERSONAL LOANS', 'WANTED', 'SUNNING BATES', 'DIRECT', 'PERSONAL LOANS'.

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Isa plans unfair and illogical

The Government's proposals for the individual savings account have generated hundreds of letters to Weekend Money. Here we publish edited highlights of some more:

From Mr J.S.S. Stewart Sir, The Labour Government has repeatedly announced that it stands on the principle of fairness and it is doubtless bound by a recent House of Lords judgment that expert opinion must be based on logic. (The Times Law Report, November 27, 1997).

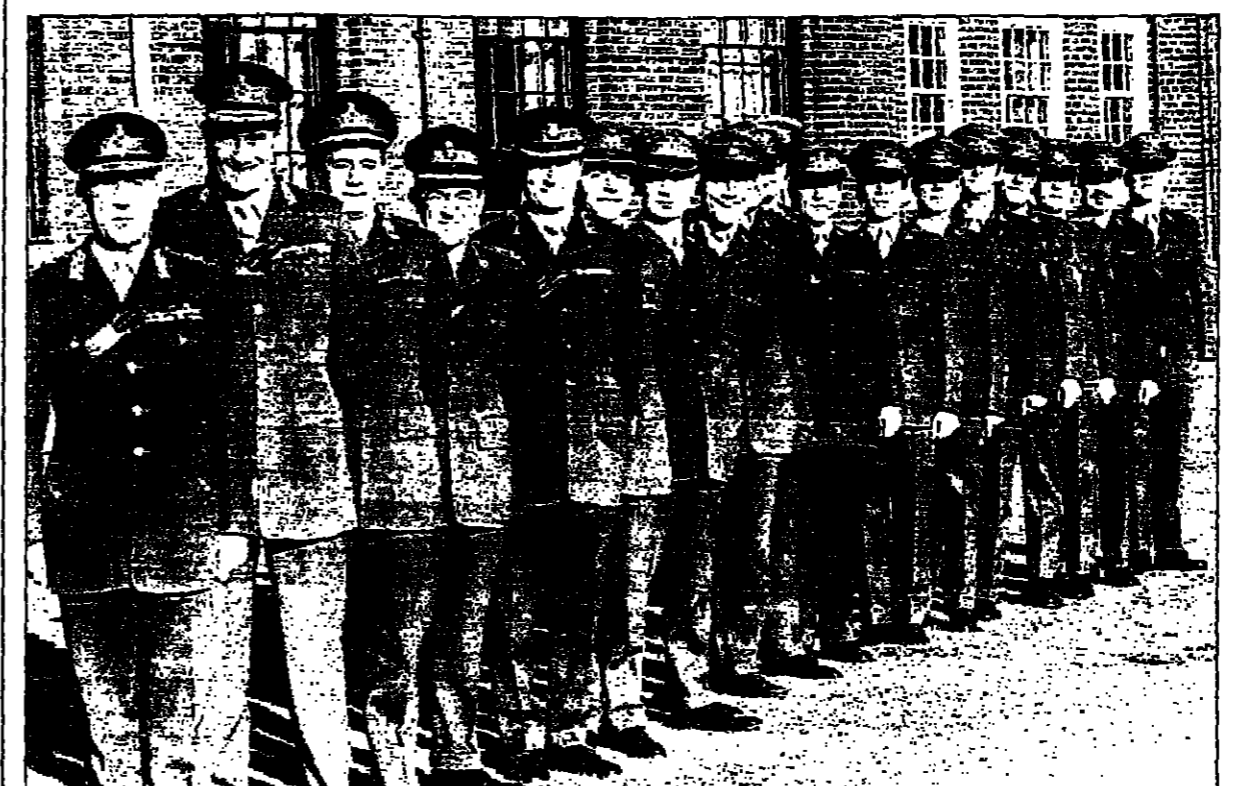
the Pep scheme that no records of contributions need to be retained. Virtually all Pep holders and providers can produce this information, correct to the nearest penny. The calculation is not difficult. For an input of £50,000, a value of £90,000 and an allowable input of £50,000 the allowable transfer value would be 50/60 of £90,000 = £75,000. The consultative document statement is illogical and the assertion is therefore dishonest.

From Mr John MacLaren Sir, I hope Gordon Brown and Frank Dobson will find time to talk to each other soon. Just as Frank Dobson is setting up the Royal Commission on Elderly Care "to determine how the cost of such care should be apportioned between public funds and private individuals" so is Gordon Brown initiating measures to make sure that fewer private individuals will be able to fund their own liabilities. The proposal to tax

Pep and Tessa money in excess of £50,000 is in effect a proposal to penalise those who set aside more than two years of nursing home costs for funding their own care. Perhaps Frank Dobson could suggest to Gordon Brown that the Isa ceiling should rise in line with age from the proposed starting level of £50,000. He could also point out to Gordon Brown that he has already eroded (by taxation of pension funds) the efforts of those using personal pensions for this provision, or must we wait for the Royal Commission to tell them to work as part of the same team?

From Mr W. Whittle Sir, It may be impossible to quantify the number of people with Peps to the value of more than £50,000 due to individuals having them with many different managers. I suggest that the next time you refer to the number of people adversely affected, you mention that this will be much higher due to the inclusion of National Savings, Friendly Society and other tax-free investments in the limit. I suspect the total will be sufficient to be electorally significant.

Half-rate service widows' pensions



From humble troopers to four-star generals, all 18 ranks in the British Army suffered from the defence cutbacks in the 1970s

From Major J.A. Foulis Sir, Some clarification and balance seems to be required in the "campaign" over half-rate widow's pensions. The introduction of the half rate was part of the improvement in terms of service given to personnel serving in 1974; those, like me, who already had more than 20 years' service to count towards their pension did not automatically receive this new rate for all their service: service prior to 1974 qualified for the one-third rate and service after that date, only, counted for half rate.

As a concession (and, no doubt, to simplify administration) those such as myself were given the opportunity to "buy in" those years which did not qualify for the half-rate pension; by no means all opted to take advantage of this offer - the less service one had to count prior to 1974, the less important it probably seemed: if there were to be a change to equalise all widow's pensions, those who made a not inconsiderable contribution to their pensions would immediately be put at a disadvantage. Would the campaigners then consider

refunding, to those wise enough to "buy in" the contributions they made? It is not, of course, a retrospective pension increase that is being demanded; it is a retrospective change in the terms of service which everyone knowingly and voluntarily accepted, exactly as those who, in 1974, after full explanation and, indeed, considerable persuasion, decided voluntarily not to buy in the necessary years. Yours faithfully, J. FOULIS, Ashbourne Place, York.

Reduced role for annual bonuses

From Mr Mike Urmston Sir, Please permit me to put the record straight in respect of your article ("Insurer predicts end of annual bonuses", January 6). This article has created considerable and unnecessary anxiety among the millions of people who have bought with-profit policies to repay their mortgage loans or to fund their retirements. It is categorically not the case that we predicted the disappearance, or even the virtual disappearance, of annual bonuses on with-profit policies. What we did was to state clearly in our correspondence that in our view, the annual bonuses - which are based on long-term interest rates, or more specifically, the long-term yields on gilts and other fixed-interest securities - are expected to play a slightly reduced role in the payouts of with-profit policies. The reason for this is that as inflation gradually declines, particularly as we approach economic and monetary union, then long-term interest rates and gilt yields and with their annual bonuses will reflect this decline. They will most certainly not disappear. We also made the point that the investment growth on equities - rather than yields from gilts or other fixed-interest securities - was the main driver of the returns on our with-profit fund. In view of this, it is inevitable that the final or "terminal" bonuses which reflect this equity growth and are paid out on the maturity of with-profit policies are in future likely to be a more significant part of this payout.

THE WEEK IN MONEY

THREE and a half million people have still not returned their self-assessment tax forms.

If only a third of this number fail to meet the Inland Revenue's January 31 deadline, the Treasury stands to make more than £100 million in instant penalties, as those who miss the deadline will be subject to an immediate £100 fine.

Taxpayers must also enclose cheques for tax due for 1996-97. Those who fail to do so will have to pay interest of 9.5 per cent on the outstanding amount.

Friends Provident, the mutual life insurer, has improved payouts to maturing life policyholders in 1998, but has cut some annual bonus rates.

The declared regular bonus rate for conventional life policies is 2.75 per cent (3 per cent last year) on the sum assured and 4 per cent (4.5 per cent last year) on accumulated bonuses.

Norwich Union is the second leading insurance group to cut annual bonuses on with-profits policies to reflect expected lower long-

term investment returns. NU said that investment returns for pensions would be reduced after the decision by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to remove tax relief on UK dividend income in his first Budget.

On Monday, General Accident Life cut a number of bonuses and predicted that annual bonuses would play a reduced role in favour of larger maturity bonuses.

The Association of British Insurers said that policyholders face a possible premium increase as one of the worst storms of the decade left an estimated £500 million repair bill for structural damage.

The average UK pension fund produced an overall return of 16 per cent in 1997, equivalent to a real return of more than 12 per cent. This was well ahead of the average real returns over the past ten-year and 20-year periods of about 9 per cent a year.

The strong growth was achieved despite the loss of tax credits on dividend share income halfway through the year.

Tax tips for Peps

From Mr Christopher Dobie Sir, In your article on traded endowment policies (Cash in 23 Haston Crescent, Kinross, Perth).

From Mr F.A. Fielding Sir, I am a recently retired middle-class professional engineer. Through prudence I have built up over the past ten years Peps and a Tessa with the aim of providing income over and above my pension in retirement. More recently a further aim has been to provide funds for long-term health care should this ever be required by my wife or myself.

Geoffrey Robinson seems to take the view that people with more than £50,000 in savings are very wealthy but such a sum can very easily be used up in providing health care. The proposed £50,000 ceiling is a retrospective tax which hits those who have saved for the future. If the Government is serious about encouraging people to save, the imposition of a retrospective tax hardly seems to be the best way to go about it.

Yours faithfully, F. FIELDING, Mount Iver, 2 Upper Glen Road, Bridge of Allan, Stirling.

Basic-rate taxpayers and gifts to charity

From Mr Maurice Fitzpatrick Sir, You report (Let the Taxman boost your Christmas giving, December 6) on how the tax man can boost the value of gifts to charity. A point arises which affects charitable givers who only pay tax at 20 per cent.

Let us use a hypothetical example of Mr Green, who gives an amount of £250 cash to his favourite charity under Gift Aid or via a tax-qualifying deed of covenant. Following normal procedures, the charity asks him to confirm that he is a taxpayer and he gives this confirmation. The Inland Revenue (IR) regard the charity as having received the £250 net of 23 per cent tax which Mr Green has paid on £325 gross income (£325 income less £75 tax at 23 per cent = £250 cash gift to charity). The charity claims the £75 in cash from the IR, and everyone is happy.

Those who do not pay higher-rate tax can buy non-qualifying policies that are income-taxable, but where basic tax has been paid by the life office. No further tax is paid by the recipient of the maturity value. Yours faithfully, CHRISTOPHER DOBIE, Beale Dobie & Co Ltd, Fulbridge Mill, Maldon, Essex.

Letters to Weekend Money

Letters to Weekend Money are welcomed, but The Times cannot give individual replies or advice. No legal responsibility can be accepted for the advice or statements in these columns and it must be emphasised that professional advice should always be sought over investment matters. Letters to Weekend Money can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5082.

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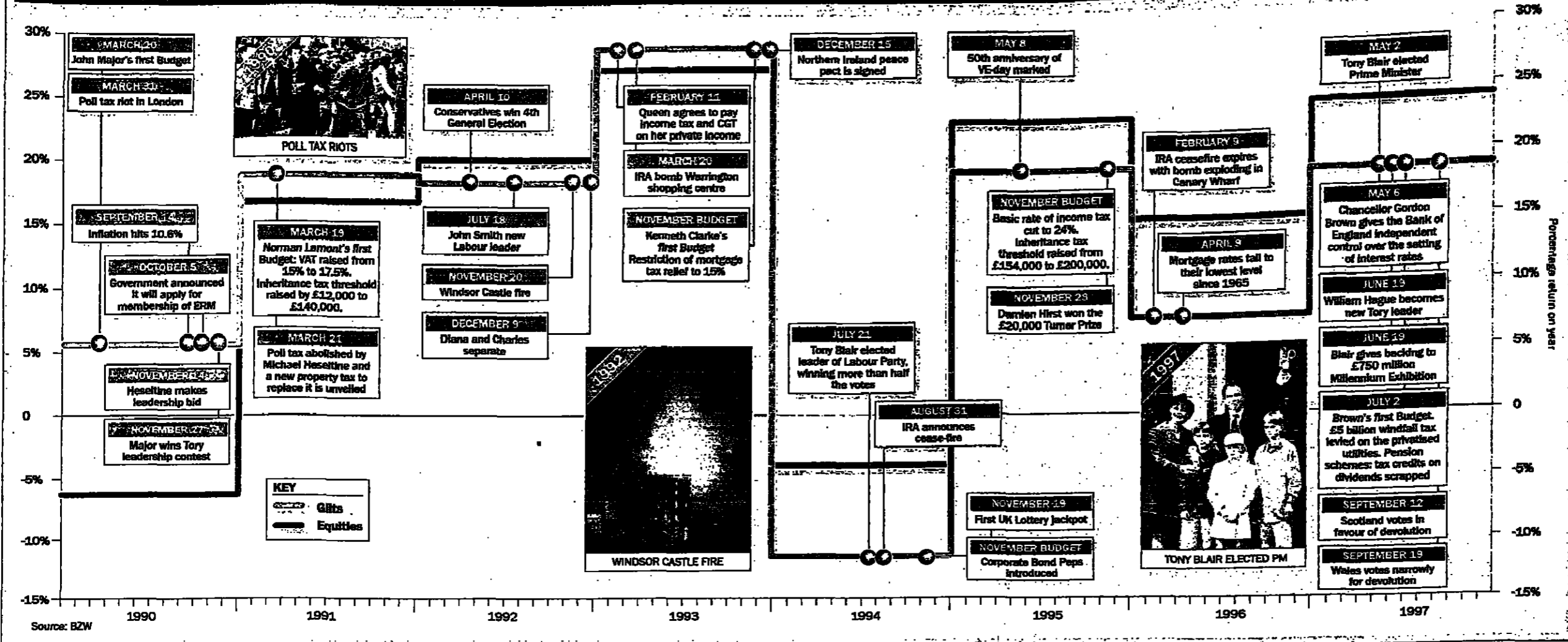
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HOW GILTS HAVE KEPT PACE WITH EQUITIES IN THE 1990s



# Will gilts shine on in '98?

Patrick Collinson looks at one of the safest forms of investment and asks the experts where they think the market will go this year

Conventional City wisdom is that shares will always outperform government bonds. But in 1997 gilts enjoyed a boom year. According to BZW, the average gilt investor earned a total return of about 19.5 per cent last year, better than in any year in the 1990s, apart from 1993. If investors had been lucky enough to be in certain types of "long-dated" government bonds, the return was about 25 per cent. Shares also enjoyed a boom year, but the boom was focused on a narrow range of large stocks, which outperformed smaller and medium-sized companies. The FTSE all share index advanced 24.5 per cent. Gilts have also shone in the first few days of 1998. The bad news on the economy — that growth is expected to slow sharply this year — has cut expectations of rise in interest rates and sent gilts higher. The bonus for gilt-holders is that they have enjoyed spectacular returns without the degree

of risk that investing in shares involves. Gilts are issued by the Government and are considered to be the safest investment apart from leaving money on deposit. The Government would have to go bust before failing to honour its gilts. Losing your shirt on an investment in shares is a much greater possibility. Yet the extra reward from accepting the risk of investing in shares is surprisingly small. If an investor started the 1990s with £1,000 in gilts, they would have risen in value to about £2,600 today, only £230 less than if the money had been invested in shares, carrying much higher risk. How have gilts been able to achieve such high returns and are they set to last? Theodore Zemek, M&G Global Fixed Income Director,

said: "1997 was the year of the gilt. It was one of the best years in history for gilt investment: British economic fundamentals were good, the Bank of England was made independent, the market liked the new Government, and there was a shortage of stock." The key factor has been the decline in inflation through the 1990s and, even more importantly, the decline in inflation expectations. Low inflation allows interest rates to be cut and because of the way that gilts are priced, a fall in rates produces a rise in the value of gilts. Forget that the bank base rate went up several times last year. What affects gilt investors is the rate for long-term borrowing, which has been falling as the market has become more

and more convinced that Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, will win the battle against inflation. The inflation bogeyman has constantly disappointed the pessimists. John Monckton, Legal & General bond director responsible for more than £12.5 billion in gilt and fixed-income investment, said: "The UK was bolstered by the US, where the inflation output was much better than forecasters were expecting at the end of 1996." The prospect of British membership of the European single currency has been the second factor boosting gilts. A single currency implies a single interest rate, almost certainly above the level of German rates. These have traditionally been lower than British rates, and the prospect of convergence has produced large gains for

gilts. The third factor has been the Asian financial crisis. International investors have bailed out of Asian bonds and are looking for secure bonds with a good interest rate. UK gilts have been one of the main beneficiaries. Will the gilts boom continue in 1998? Weekend Money found a wide range of views among the experts. The bears: Peter Raynes, head of global bond investment at Commercial Union, which manages £35 billion in global bonds, said: "I am cautious of the gilt market at these levels. The market is driven by expectations of a US slowdown keeping interest rates stable or falling, but during 1998 we will start to focus more on capacity constraints and the impact of low unemployment on inflation. I also expect sterling to come under pressure, limiting the scope for interest rate cuts in the UK. We could see the reverse of 1997, with a good first quarter followed by a poor second, third and fourth quarter." Mark Gull, Gartmore senior investment manager, said: "Everybody is expecting slower growth, but will it be slow enough to prevent a pick-up in inflation? We think the majority of good news for gilts is in the price and they are now pretty expensive."

The moderately optimistic Ms Zemek said: "It's alright ahead. I don't expect the same returns as last year but the outlook is reasonable. They are underpinned by the lower than expected Government borrowing requirement and the move to EMU. European Government bond markets are not as sophisticated as the UK's, and as European pension funds become more professional in their management, gilts will attract more foreign interest." Mr Monckton said: "By the end of 1998 I expect to see the gilt/bund spread — the difference between British and German rates — to have fallen from just over 1 per cent now to 0.50-0.75 per cent. I remain bullish on index-linked rather than conventional gilts, and prefer medium-dated to long-dated stock." The bulls: David Kauders, of Kauders Portfolio Management, a small adviser on gilts in Somerset with £22 million under management, believes that global stock markets are going through a Japanese-style bubble that will take years to unwind, and that interest rates will tumble further. "We have had 23 years in which the equity market has been a one-way ticket. I believe the whole cycle is now about to turn. Deflation is more important than inflation and I can foresee inflation at zero. The losers will be all equities and property and the winners will be the highest-quality fixed-interest securities, ie, those guaranteed by the Government and in the UK that means gilts."

### GILT COMPLEX

Even the most sophisticated investors have a gilt complex when it comes to understanding the ins and outs of the gilt market. What are gilts? Gilts are bonds issued by the Government when it needs to borrow money. The gilt buyer is lending the Government money in return for interest. What are the benefits of gilts? Gilt buyers have the certainty of a fixed return (the coupon) paid half-yearly and the certainty of a fixed value when the gilt matures (the redemption date). If the gilt is bought at a price above its nominal amount, investors will incur a capital loss if they hold it until redemption. How are gilts priced? The price quoted for gilts is for a nominal amount of £100 worth of stock. If the price quoted is, say, £90, then it is described as "below par" or "at a discount". If the price quoted is £110, the buyer is paying a premium over the nominal amount. What is the rate of interest? Each gilt issued by the Government promises to pay a specific amount of interest each year. The level of interest varies according to the conditions at the time of issue. What an investor receives will depend on the amount paid for the gilt. If you pay more than £100 for £100 of nominal stock, the interest you receive will be less than the nominal rate quoted. If you pay less than £100, it will be more. Why does the capital value rise and fall? If a gilt issued ten years ago offers 10 per cent interest, but base rates then drop to 6 per cent, investors will be keen to buy the 10 per cent gilt because of the extra interest that it offers. This demand pushes up its price, so the owner of the 10 per cent gilt enjoys a rise in capital value as well as the interest payment. The sequence of events can also work in reverse. What is the tax position of gilts? Interest on gilts is liable to income tax. Interest on gilts held on the National Savings Stock Register is paid gross but should be declared to the Inland Revenue. Gains from the sale or redemption of a gilt are exempt from capital gains tax. No stamp duty is payable on purchases and sales of gilts. Gilts are not a qualifying investment for Peps. Where do I buy a gilt? The easiest way is at the post office, where you can get the pamphlet *Buying Gilts without a stockbroker*. It details buying through the National Savings Stock Register and contains an application form. Investors can also buy into gilts via a gilt and fixed income unit trust, offered by the big investment houses.

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HOT hint hunch hearsay

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Handwritten note: كتابي الثاني



It's almost all over: Rory McGrath, the comedian, with Hector the self-assessment mascot this week

# Inland Revenue about to blow the final whistle

Caroline Merrell reports as the deadline nears for self-assessment tax returns

The Inland Revenue this week delivered a stern warning to the 3.4 million taxpayers yet to file their returns under the new self-assessment regime.

They have only 21 days left to deliver the forms, together with payments, before they face hefty penalties from the Revenue. Missing the deadline will produce an immediate £100 fine; any tax outstanding at the end of this month will also add interest at 9.5 per cent.

At a press conference this week featuring Rory McGrath, from *They Think It's All Over*, the BBC TV sports quiz, Revenue officials indicated that they would not be lenient on those people that failed to make the deadline.

Clive Corlett, deputy chairman of the Inland Revenue, emphasised that there would be no second chance for the latecomers. He said: "There will be no injury or extra time and please do not let it come down to penalties." If only a third of those taxpayers with outstanding forms fail to file, the Revenue stands to make more than £100 million in instant fines.

Self-assessment affects nine million people including the self-employed, partners, higher-rate taxpayers and those with complicated tax affairs.

The Revenue claims that the new self-assessment regime is a success.

in spite of the fact that 3.4 million from the total of nine million that come under the new rules have not returned their forms.

Top accountancy firms, including Price Waterhouse and KPMG, were last week urging the dilatory not to leave the forms to the last minute. They pointed out that the forms require very specific financial details. John Whitting, a Price Waterhouse partner, said: "Taxpayers should really think about tackling the form this weekend."

The Revenue pointed out that there was no disadvantage in filing the forms early. It was rumoured that those that sent their forms off early would be more likely to be investigated — the Revenue has been at pains to deny this.

The department claims that after the initial deluge of forms to meet an earlier September 30 deadline for the Revenue to calculate the tax, the returns had begun to dry up.

A spokesman said: "Not many people are sending in their returns at the moment. The suspicion must be that many have been completed but are sitting in agents' offices." Last week the Revenue urged

accountants to return forms they may be keeping on behalf of clients. Many of the outstanding forms are due from the self-employed, who usually employ the services of accountants.

It also cautioned that taxpayers who are not relying on accountants should give themselves plenty of leeway.

It said: "If we have to send the return back to you for any reason, there may still be time for you to rectify matters before January 31." If the tax return is sent back to the taxpayer then it has not been "logged on" to the computer system and does not count for the January 31 deadline.

As well as the £100 fines and the 9.5 per cent interest, the Revenue will impose a 5 per cent surcharge on any tax still unpaid after more than 28 days, and a further 5 per cent will be imposed on tax unpaid after more than six months.

The Revenue last week reminded those that remain puzzled about their tax returns that it would be keeping at least 350 offices open around the country to provide

assistance. Offices will even be open on January 31, a Saturday. A Revenue spokeswoman said: "The officials can't actually fill the forms in for you, but they can advise you what to do."

Controversy has dogged the self-assessment regime since it was launched more than a year ago. The form was initially deemed to be too complex for the layman to understand. A pilot scheme found that even trained accountants had difficulty in filling in the forms.

The Revenue claims that the revised version has been more successful — only 6 per cent of forms had to be returned because of errors. Common mistakes include failure to complete the self-employed boxes, detailing information on separate schedules instead of including the information on the return, entering notes on the return like "refer to p60" or "information to follow" instead of entering the actual figure. The most common mistake is not signing the form.

The Revenue said that its helpline had received 587,000 calls, including 5,000 on one day alone.

The most popular questions asked by the public included, Can I change or add to the tax return later?; do you want me to send in accounts?; what happens if I realise I've made a mistake after I have sent the return in?

## Defer tax deadline, ICA urges Revenue

The Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICA), the leading accountancy trade organisation, is asking the Inland Revenue to put back the deadline for returning self-assessment tax forms until the end of March.

Extending the deadline would help the 1.5 million people the ICA estimates will fail to file their tax returns by the end of this month.

In a letter to *The Times*, Richard Shooter, chairman of the ICA self-assessment monitoring group, lambasts the Inland Revenue over its handling of the introduction of self-assessment.

Mr Shooter claims that the first year of the new regime has proven to be extremely problematical. He claims the TV and radio advertising campaign which featured, among others, Desmond Lynam, the *Match of the Day* presenter, and Hector the tax inspector cartoon character, has been ineffective.

He also believes that the training received by the Inland Revenue staff had not been effective, and that the department has had difficulty in coping with the increased workload.

Mr Shooter said: "It is now time for the Government and the Inland Revenue to exercise a greater level of compassion, co-operation and flexibility regarding this particular aspect."

Some accountants are also critical of the Inland Revenue and its handling of self-assessment. Iain Anderson, KPMG partner, said: "To start with the Inland Revenue staff were not very helpful, they did not seem to have been very well briefed. Some tax districts were particularly unhelpful." She believes that tax offices have a huge backlog of correspondence.

Elsbeth May, tax partner at KPMG, said: "Before self-assessment there were theoretically penalties for late submission of tax returns.

"In principle, tax returns had to be returned within 30 days of issue. In practice, as long as you made sure that by October 31 following a tax year either all of the appropriate assessments had been issued or the Inland Revenue had been given enough information to issue them, penalties were not charged. Even if you missed the October 31 deadline it was rare for penalties to be charged unless there were long delays before submissions."

Accountants are urging those who have not yet filed

in their tax returns to do it as soon as possible.

Martin Dunn, a Blick Rothenberg partner, said: "If you have not already done so, you will need to assemble all the information for the year ended April 5 to be included in your return, including a P60, a P11D, return of benefits and reimbursed expenses, tax vouchers for interest or dividends received and details of allowable expenses and tax deductible payments."

Geoffrey Adams, who heads the British Taxpayers Association (BTA), advises taxpayers to act quickly, but carefully.

"Do not just guessimate what you put in the boxes just to meet the deadline. This could lead you to being fined up to £3,000. Also make sure you keep a copy of your return, so that you can check the Revenue's figures."

He added: "If you need professional help, and at this late stage it is probably wise, make contact now — this really is crunch time."

Ms May said: "A word of warning for anyone who has set up new self-employment activities during the last year. Let us suppose you started business on March 1, 1997, and you intend to draw up your first set of accounts for the year to February 28, 1998.

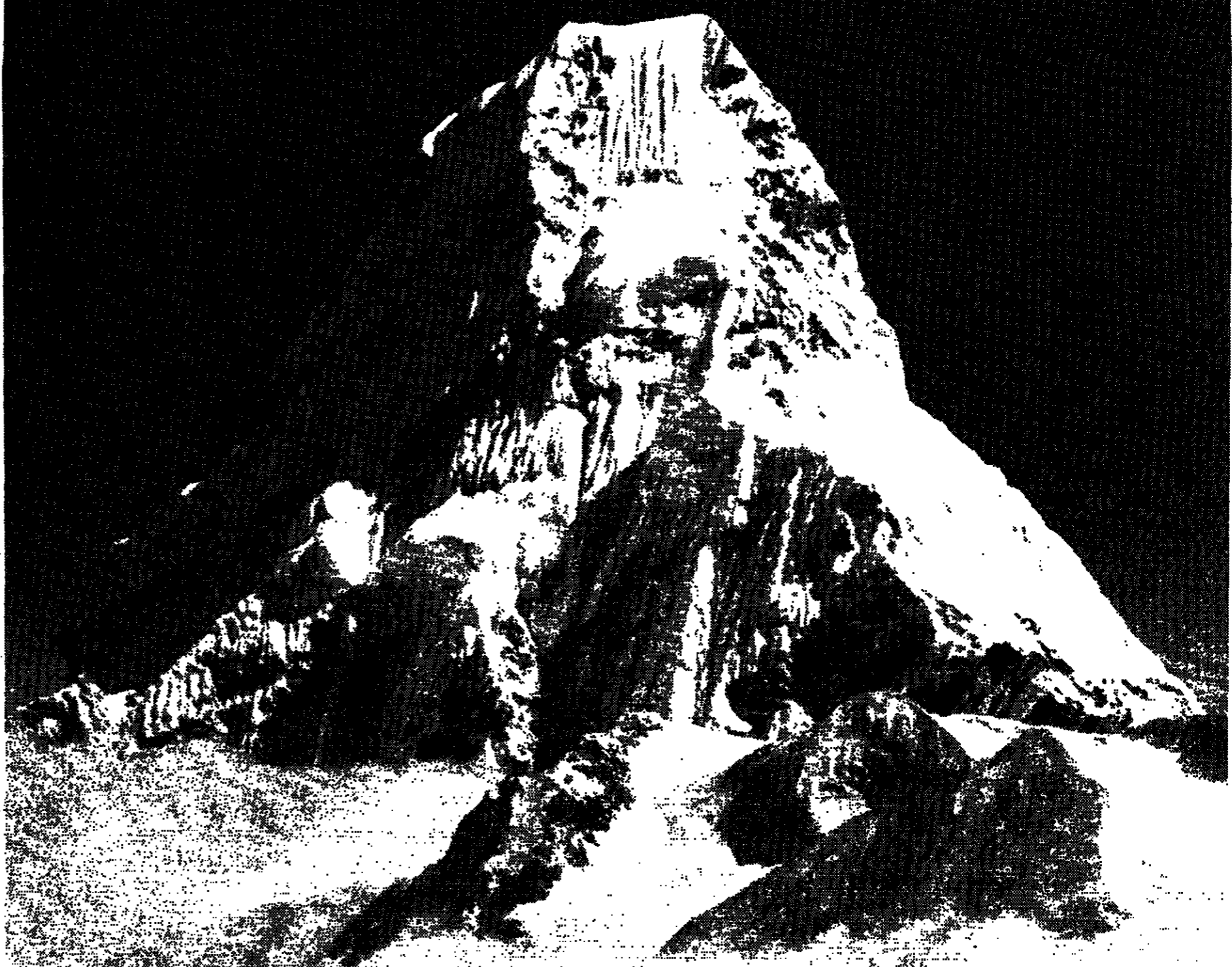
"Whether or not you have received a tax return for the year to April 5, 1997, the law requires that you notify your chargeability to tax by October of that year. As long as you pay any tax which may be due for 1996-97 by January 31, 1998, you should avoid penalties, but if you wait until after your accounting period before notifying the Inland Revenue of your activity you will be clocking up interest and penalties."

Maurice Fitzpatrick, of Chantrey Velocast, highlighted a hidden clause in the Inland Revenue handbook on self-assessment. It points out that if the outstanding tax is less than the £100 fine then the penalty would be reduced to the level of the outstanding tax. He said: "Between 50,000 and 100,000 could be affected by this, assuming one million people miss the deadline."

BTA helpline is on 0990 282829, tax team emergency tax clinic (800) 393520, Inland Revenue self-assessment helpline is on 0645 000444. Letters, page 23.

CAROLINE MERRELL

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GOLD FOOLS 54

Graham Searjeant on won way to make money from gold

WEEKEND MONEY

MIG ATTACK 56

Mortgage indemnity guarantee policies come under fire



Frances Gibb reports on moves to reform the rights of unmarried couples

Sums and lovers



Some do, some don't clockwise from left, Hugh Grant and Elizabeth Hurley, Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall, Elton John and David Furness and Liam Gallagher and Patsy Kensit



Gordon Brown and Sarah Macaulay are doing it. So are Liz Hurley and Hugh Grant. Living together is in vogue: more than 40 per cent of couples live together before marriage and increasing numbers also choose to stay unmarried, for several years. Jerry Hall and Mick Jagger only succumbed to matrimony after 13 years of cohabitation. Now nearly one million people are living together and the Law Commission is looking at reforms that could grant unmarried couples, including those of the same sex, some of the legal rights of the married.

one of the Law Commissioners, said the present law was unfair, uncertain and illogical. A cohabitant is unlikely to receive anything on the breakdown of a relationship unless he or she has made a direct financial contribution to the cost of buying or improving the home. Many people believe in the idea of the "common law wife" — the notion that a woman who lived with a man for many years would naturally acquire legal rights. But this is largely a myth: "the so-called common law wife does not have any legal rights — you only acquire them on marriage."

At present, if a non-married couple without children splits up, what happens is almost entirely based on property rights acquired during the relationship. Usually, said Mr Harper, the property is in the man's name and the court will look to see whether the woman has made any contribution to the purchase of the home or payment of the mortgage. If not, the court will have to try to find evidence of a "common intention" that the woman should have a share in the property. If there are children, the woman can seek a transfer of property order under the Children Act 1989, or a lump sum order by way of capital and maintenance, but only for the children's benefit.

partner specialising in family law at the London firm of Charles Russell, that their ownership share (whether 50/50, 60/40) is spelled out in the deeds that go to the Land Registry. "Then there is no problem and any argument about who put in what money or where the money came from is irrelevant," he said. Nonetheless, such legal measures as wills are advisable, so that — as Professor Barton put it — "the hated sister can't turn

up at the funeral, claim under the intestacy laws and chuck the grieving partner out of the deceased's house." This is important for gay couples as of right under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975. The 200,000 children born every year to unmarried couples are covered by the Child Support Acts as are legitimate children and so fathers would have to pay maintenance.

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BUSINESS NEWS PAGES 27-31 WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

The Commission's move would be an attempt to eradicate some of the legal and financial pitfalls of cohabitation. Living together carries none of the legal certainties of marriage and the courts are largely powerless to remedy problems that arise if couples separate. The controversial report, expected this year, will not propose placing unmarried couples on an equal legal footing with married ones. But in a series of options, it will recommend ways to remove some of the present legal inequities of cohabitation. Charles Harpum,

Mark Harper, of the Solicitors' Family Law Association — 4,000 family law solicitors — says present laws, a mixture of family and property law, are archaic and "wholly inappropriate to today's circumstances." The present problem was starkly highlighted by Mr Justice Johnson in a case in 1994 (T v S), when he acknowledged the "sadness that, after a long and seemingly happy relationship, this mother of five children, never having been married to their father, has no rights against him of her own. She has no right to be supported by him in the short, still less in the long

term: no right in herself to even have a roof over her head." In that case, the mother received nothing in her own name and the property in which she and the children lived will be sold and the proceeds paid to the father when the youngest child is 21. The mother will then be 55 and homeless.

But what can unmarried couples do in the meantime? Chris Barton, professor of family law at Staffordshire University, says they could draw up a cohabitation agreement, provided it complies with the basic rules of contract. "This could deal conclusively with most of the legalities, from who owns which CDs to post-relationship maintenance." Ownership rights can be set out by a solicitor — necessary in the case of one party moving into property owned by the other. If a couple decide jointly to buy a property, then it is crucial, said Grant Howell, a

Branson banks on quiet lift-off

The wait is nearly over for thousands of Richard Branson's fans who have been queuing up to open a new Virgin One account.



Branson: 24-hour banking facility, but it is variable and ranges between 8.1 per cent and 8.95 per cent a year, depending on how much your credit limit is in relation to the value of your home.

The telephone-based service, which combines a current account and a flexible mortgage, was launched last November to Virgin Direct's customers. But newcomers will have to wait until Friday before they can sign up. Nearly 10,000 people have expressed an interest in the new service and are expected to join next week. But the advertising blitz that characterised the launch of other Virgin products will not accompany the birth of Virgin One.

David Ramsbottom, marketing manager at Virgin Direct, said: "The volume of business that we have already attracted is the sort of volume we are looking for. We don't want to stir up far more interest than we can manage. We need to maintain the sort of service levels that are required." Virgin One, a joint venture between Virgin Direct and the Royal Bank of Scotland, is open to those earning at least £16,000 a year and who are looking to take out a mortgage of £50,000.

The 24-hour service allows you to run your everyday finances using just one bank account from which you can control your mortgage, banking, credit cards, loans and savings. There is a single interest rate for the entire

facility, but it is variable and ranges between 8.1 per cent and 8.95 per cent a year, depending on how much your credit limit is in relation to the value of your home. The service is aimed at busy people with neither the time nor the inclination to shop around for financial products. So far most applications for the Virgin One account have come from experienced borrowers aged between 35 and 40 years who already have mortgages with the main lenders. However, a significant number will be defecting from the rival telephone banking service First Direct. Most have properties worth £150,000 and are looking for loans of between 60 per cent and 65 per cent of that value.

SUSAN EMMETT

Plessey dispute reaches court

A legal wrangle over retirement benefits being fought by hundreds of pensioners formerly employed by Plessey, the electronics company, will finally reach the High Court next week after a nine-year battle.

The case, which could take five weeks to settle, is being brought by more than 400 pensioners who enjoyed private medical benefits in retirement under a scheme offered by Plessey. The scheme was withdrawn from pensioners after GEC took over Plessey in 1989. Those affected by GEC's action included Sir John Clark, former chairman of the company, who suffered a stroke in 1995 and received private medical treatment in London.

Up to 2,000 former Plessey employees could be affected by the court action. GEC could have to pay them millions of pounds in compensation. The Plessey pensioners' action group is being spearheaded by Kenneth Lilley, who ran the Liverpool office of the electronics group. Mr Lilley is incensed at the length of time the case has taken to come to court. He said: "A lot of pensioners have died in the intervening period." Even if the pensioners have died, their estates will benefit if Mr Lilley and his solicitors are successful with their action.

Solicitors acting for the pensioners said that they had been told that they would have private health insurance for

life, provided they retired and took their pensions immediately. They claim that they would not necessarily have taken early retirement if they had known that the private medical rights were being withdrawn.

The pensioners themselves have been forced to pay a total of £200,000 into the court to ensure that their costs are covered should they lose the case.

Mr Lilley said: "We had to go back to the members of the action group to ask them for more money because the legal costs are rising all the time." GEC said that the post-retirement health benefits were supplied on a voluntary basis. The company, which has more than £1 billion in cash, said that it could not continue offering the free medical care benefits because the costs were growing all the time.

One thing that may help the Plessey pensioners is a case settled three years ago involving Philips.

In July of 1995, the High Court decided that the company had been wrong to withdraw the private medical benefits involved by former employees. Philips decided not to appeal against the judgment and was forced to pay costs and compensation.

This case took more than eight years to be resolved. Philips also had to pay the costs of the case.

CAROLINE MERRELL

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The best food and wine with Bissell and MacQuit



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Win the three-star meal of a lifetime

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THE TIMES WEEKEND

SATURDAY JANUARY 10 1998

The best of food and wine with Bissell and MacQuitty

Robin Young introduces two writers to Weekend who, week by week, will change your life for the better

Today Weekend welcomes an unmatched duo who can be guaranteed to improve the standard of food and drink in every Times reader's home. Frances Bissell, *The Times* Cook, and Jane MacQuitty, *The Times* wine correspondent, whose work has for the past few years been appearing in the Magazine, join the Weekend team. The two have unrivalled abilities in their respective roles. Read on... and put your trust in Bissell and MacQuitty. Your life will change for the better.

FRANCES BISSELL became *The Times* Cook ten years ago. I introduced her to readers saying: "She is more like the average housewife than any other cookery writer in Britain... and the best private cook in Britain." Now I would have to add that she has incomparable experience among practising food writers, because alone among practitioners of her craft she has been guest cook in some of the world's leading hotels, including the InterContinental in London, the Manila Peninsula, the Dusit Thani in Bangkok, the George V in Paris and twice at the Mandarin Oriental in Hong Kong, where she is hailed as "the queen of British cooking".

All right, I will admit we owe Bissell to another newspaper. It

was *The Observer*, through Paul Levy, Jane Grigson and Victor Ceszari who judged its Mouton Cadet menu competition, which can claim to have discovered her. She won the competition in 1983 having been runner-up the previous year — "The judges must have had indigestion," Paul Levy, now of *The Wall Street Journal*, harrumphs.

He says that while many of his Mouton Cadet competition winners and runners-up went on to make catering careers, none was ever as good as Bissell.

The late Jane Grigson said: "Mrs Bissell's dishes were simple and elegant with original touches. She cooked with good-humoured confidence. Her food tasted even better than we had expected."

Her 1983 success catapulted Bissell — until then a hobby cook who faithfully kept diaries of all the meals she cooked — into a new career. She had previously worked for the British Council. Now Grigson, pre-eminent among cookery writers at the time, hauled her off to Chato & Windus who started to publish her books, *A Cook's Calendar*, *The Pleasures of Cookery*, *The Real Meat Cookbook* and *The Times Cookbook*.

Bissell's food, *The Sunday Times* reported, was "exactly what one dreams of being fed

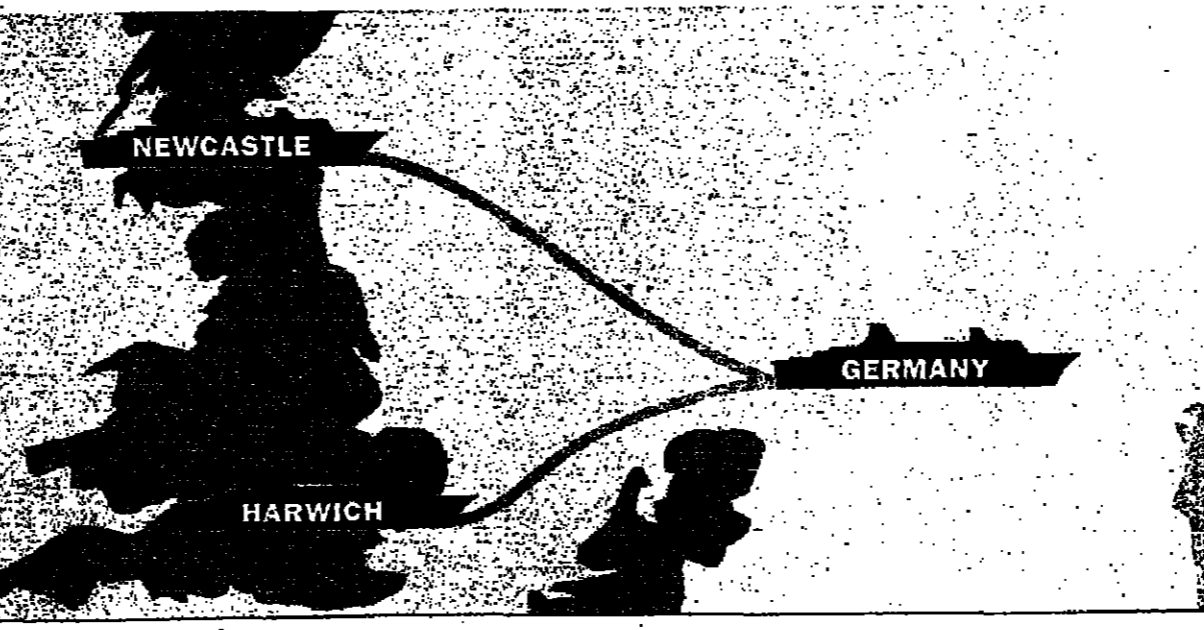
Continued on page 2



Ready to serve up a feast of fine writing: *The Times* Cook Frances Bissell and *The Times* wine correspondent Jane MacQuitty. Photograph by MARK HARRISON

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SCANDINAVIAN SEAWAYS

Continued from page 1  
In other people's homes", Bissell still considers herself first a cook, and second a cookery writer. She still cooks in a galley-type kitchen in a small top-floor flat in Hampstead, north London, though the kitchen's layout has been much improved since she first joined *The Times*.

Those who are lucky enough to be invited for a meal are in for sessions of guinea-piggery in which they are more likely to encounter recipes she is developing than any tried and tested favourites.

She does not shirk risk. The night I went, she was, for the first time, attempting *poulet en vessie* (chicken cooked inside a pig's bladder). The bladder, superbly inflated to a translucent balloon one moment, exploded the next.

"It's a good job we were not in the kitchen," she giggled, setting to work rescuing a delicious dinner from the wreckage. Next day she tried the *poulet* again, with greater success.

Bissell is always experimenting and logging results in her food books. A doctor once expressed concern that her obsession with food, as revealed in the diaries, could be symptomatic of something psychologically serious. Bissell does not see it as an obsession. "Food is a pleasure to be shared," she says. "It is an expression of yourself. For me, it was the one area in which I could be creative."

And that is where the difference between Bissell and most cookery writers lies. She is genuinely creative, inventing and developing recipes. Yet, she can work as a store-cupboard cook, opening the door to conjure a magnificent meal from what many would think incompatible or unpromising ingredients.

She is blessed with an acute memory for tastes and flavours, which she first appreciated when she spent a year at the Ecole Normale d'Instituteurs in Albi, deep in French cassoulet country. The chef earned more than the principal and, while he would not discuss cooking or give any recipes, he would allow Bissell to watch him work. "It was there I first realised that, with my memory for tastes, I could build up a bank of information about the way textures and flavours are brought into a meal," she says.

Working in great kitchens around the world has brought her unrivalled international experience, extending what was already the liveliest of culinary imaginations. She was cooking for Britain in Kuwait during a state of alert caused by the threat of invasion by Saddam Hussein; in Manila days before a revolution; in Colombo while hotel staff were being killed by Tamil Tigers; and in Bogota amid drug barons' gang wars.

She has been invited to cook at the sherry industry's official dinner in Jerez to demonstrate sherry's uses in British cookery, and asked to design and cook a gala dinner at the British Embassy in Paris in honour of British designers. On several occasions she has



Even at the age of ten, Jane MacQuitty had the nose for a good grape. At a vineyard in Majorca in 1964, her father took this photograph of young Jane with her brother Jonathan and sister Miranda.



Jane MacQuitty (centre) puts her skills to the test. "Taste may be personal," she says, "distaste is not." And right, with her father Bill, who introduced her to fine vintages at the age of eight



cooked series of dinners at the Café Royal's Michelin-starred Grill Room in London to demonstrate seasonal British produce and traditional recipes.

In addition, Bissell regularly gives cookery demonstrations at Le Cordon Bleu and Leith's schools in London, at Ballymaloe in Ireland and Farthinghoe in Northamptonshire, and elsewhere.

That, and her international travels, mean that she has a breadth of experience of cookery at every level of competence, from the giddiest heights of professional expertise to rank amateurism. She knows the problems ordinary home cooks face; she also knows the answers the world's top chefs find. Most of all, she understands food, and how to create recipes which are light, colourful and full of flavour yet simple and easy to prepare.

In the coming weeks, Bissell promises articles concerning "the things about food that make me tick", including some about "where food ideas come from". On her travels, she will be taking British cooking to New York and Las Vegas and, in March, will lead a food and wine tour to South Africa.

JANE MACQUITTY has been wine correspondent of *The Times* since 1983. For my money, she is the only British wine writer whose recommendations are consistently worth following. I regularly put my money where my mouth is on this matter. So, I have to tell you, do her editors around *The Times* offices.

We, and countless readers, have discovered a simple truth: most wine writers recommend wines that are good, fair, middling, poor or, in some cases, awful. MacQuitty never recommends anything that is less than excellent value for money.

She is different in other ways. Unlike most wine writers, who honed their craft through university wine societies or even later in life, she was brought up with fine wine.

When Pinewood Studios democratised its catering arrangements and abolished the dining room previously reserved for producers, directors and stars, her father, the film producer William MacQuitty, astutely bought all the first growths that were being off-loaded at bargain prices.

"I started drinking *Laite*, *Latour* and *Margaux* and all the great vintages of the 1940s and 1950s when I was eight," she says. "My pudding wine as a child was *Yquem* 1921, and any burgundy was *Domaine de la Romanée Conti*."

like, she has never been impressed by anything less than excellence. She is not frightened of the wine trade, and does not forgive mediocrity. I recently helped her in a tasting of the biggest-selling wines in Britain. We called it *The Naff Wine Guide*. MacQuitty's verdicts on wines such as Blue Nun, Black Tower, Mateus Rosé, Jacob's Creek, Gallo, Paul Masson, Mouton Cadet, Plat d'Or, Veuve de Vernay and Lambrusco were precise, and uncompromisingly condemnatory.

MacQuitty scores wines out of 20, counting 12 as a pass mark for acceptability. Of the best-selling wines we sampled, she scored none higher than a seven.

To those who raise the familiar protest, "But surely

taste in wine is personal", MacQuitty has a prompt reply: "Taste may be personal. Distaste is not. Faults that come from bad winemaking, industrial processing and mis-handling of inferior grapes are a fraud on the public."

"It makes me sick to think that the nine-tenths of the British population, who still scarcely ever drink wine, may be persuaded to think that all wine is like these big-selling brands. They are never good value for money, and most real wine lovers would find them undrinkable."

As a champion of the wine consumer, MacQuitty has no rival in the British press. A former editor of the *Which? Wine Guide* (1983-84), she took the present editorial team to task for a woefully inadequate 1998 edition which, among

other faults, handed the mail-order wine trade an unearned bouquet for good service and wine selection.

Of course, *The Times* gets letters of protest from offended wine companies, merchants, and the Consumers' Association, but MacQuitty's criticisms are, in my experience, invariably correctly aimed, judicious and accurate. Under the old definition that news is what somebody somewhere does not want to see in print, MacQuitty is good news indeed.

I first met her when, partly because of my position as consumer correspondent of *Decanter*, the wine buff's magazine, I was organising a series of blind tastings. One involved wine writers. I put

before them wines they had recommended in the past few weeks. The only one who still gave fair marks to her own recommendations was Jancis Robinson who, perhaps coincidentally, was appointed *The Sunday Times* wine correspondent shortly after the results came out.

It had been difficult to get wine writers to participate at all. Many had smelt a rat. Some simply said they did not do blind tastings. They did not intend to make fools of themselves.

Then, after the tasting results had appeared, this tall, rather schoolgirlish figure launched herself at me at another wine gathering. "Why wasn't I included in your tasting," she said. "Why didn't you ask me?"

The reason was that I did not, until then, know who she was. MacQuitty was working for *House & Garden*, not a magazine on my regular reading list, and I vaguely believed she was another member of the wine-writing fraternity who suffered under the hopelessly inappropriate name of Penny Drinkwater.

She disabused me of that illusion and, in subsequent tastings, proved her worth. She became, with Jancis Robinson, Oz Clarke and the late James Rogers, my core panel of expertise and, on balance, I found her sprawling, scrawled tasting notes the most detailed and enlightening of all. I have trusted her implicitly ever since.

Last year I met again an old childhood friend, now a builder with the hobby of collecting cookbooks and trying recipes from them. "What wines do you drink?" I asked. He said: "Gallo chardonnay" and "Romanian pinot noir."

His sixtieth birthday was coming up. When MacQuitty's top 100 selections started to appear in *The Times Magazine* I whisked off to the Co-op, Asda, and Safeway to buy her recommendations at less than £3.50 a bottle. I wanted to open my friend's eyes to a world of wine he was missing, but at a price that he could still afford.

It was one of the most successful presents I ever gave. "Those wines were terrific," my friend enthused. He has been a MacQuitty fan ever since.

True, Golden and Clarke, with the power of television's *Food and Drink Programme*, probably sell more wine by their recommendations than any other wine commentators in Britain. But MacQuitty, I maintain, "sells" more really good wine than anybody else.

It is an impression that quality wine merchants endorse. "The Jane MacQuitty factor is very real," one told me. "When she nominates a wine a star buy, it marches off the shelves, and we notice that it is often the same people who come back for more the next time she makes a recommendation from our list. There is a definite and growing following for her and, of course, we think she fully deserves it."

Jane MacQuitty on how to be a wine-taster, page 6. Frances Bissell rebels against the beef ban, page 7.

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# After hunters and meat-eaters, are motorists the next victims of the nanny state?

## Convivial drops of alcohol oil the wheels of rural life

Tremendous news from the Home Office. As a result of Christmas anti-drink driving measures, four out of five motorists involved in accidents in the West Country over the Christmas and New Year period were not, repeat not, under the influence of alcohol. Even in Wiltshire — where, as everyone knows, Christmas feasting assumes Rabelaisian proportions — only 27 drivers who had accidents were found to be tight. Think of all the journeys made over that fortnight — all the shopping centres visited, all the relations descended upon, all the parties attended. To have barely more than a couple of dozen boozey people fouling up on Wiltshire's roads is good going. It is not as if all these accidents involved injury. Some may have been nothing more than bumps in the supermarket car park. We really ought to celebrate this victory for self-control. Let's have a drink.

All right — I hear the criticism before you make it. I am treating a serious subject too lightly. Road accidents are terrible, particularly when people get hurt or killed. But we must keep a sense of proportion. When the Home Office figures were announced, Wiltshire and Somerset were castigated for the 20 per cent of drivers involved in accidents whose breath-tests proved positive or who failed or

refused to produce a test. But 20 per cent strikes me as an extraordinarily impressive figure. Other counties did even better: the national figure was a near-miraculous 9 per cent. Even this was condemned by a spokesman for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents as "appalling".

Surely it is time to target resources at improving driving behaviour among the majority of sober drivers rather than pursuing the inebriated gill farther. It is not that I condone drunks behind the wheel: far from it. But there is a law of diminishing returns.

Everyone will agree that safety on the roads is a desirable end for society to pursue. But then so is the maintenance of an adequate social life, particularly in sparsely populated rural areas. Loneliness contributes to the high suicide rate among farmers. Some commentators, observing what they regard as Wiltshire and Somerset's disap-

pointing performance, have been quick to characterise the rural population as latter-day Falstaffs, wallowing in excess.

I protest. There is what might be called an unreconstructed element in country areas, that is true. I doubt that as much mineral water is consumed in the shires as in the metropolis. Fashion reaches country people rather later than it does the lo-fi-dwellers on the banks of the Thames. The countryman is slower to relinquish the old ways. In New Britain, this will strike some people as reprehensible: reason enough for New Labour to continue its campaign to demoralise traditional country dwellers, seen in recent actions over badger control, shotgun licences, hunting, the green pound and beef on the bone.

But the problem for police forces — and society — is not excessive consumption in the countryside, but the absence of any practical mode of transport other than the



Tougher laws on drink-driving are counter-productive, argues Clive Aslet

private car. For that reason, successive increases in petrol taxes, continued in the last budget, have already unfairly penalised country people: unlike the inhabitants of cities, they have no alternative but to use their cars.

For the Government or police to take even more draconian measures against drink driving than those already in operation would effectively exterminate social life in some areas, and achieve little additional benefit in road safety.

While objecting to the portrayal of country people as a lot of old soaks, I acknowledge that there are some habits — not always unattractive — that encourage the consumption of alcohol. It tends to be colder in the country, and people are out in all weathers.

That stimulates a taste for such warming potions as sice gin and (a personal favourite) bull shot. I suspect, too, that the long distances guests must travel to reach dinner

parties means that greater efforts are made over them.

People dress up more (very un-Gordon Brown); they make more of an evening of it. If they are lucky, their host brings out the brandy and cigars. These days, many people refuse such temptations before driving home, but some do not. It may be next to impossible to call a taxi at such moments, and as for bus and train services, they do not exist.

Those who have imbibed too freely may assuage their consciences with the thought that the roads are likely to be empty. Besides, they can go by the back ways. It is reprehensible, but it happens. Probably such attitudes are dying out. I suspect they persist more among older age groups.

The breathalyser has already changed the way rural people live. No doubt it has had its influence on the demise of country pubs — 400 have ceased trading since 1994,

according to the Rural Development Commission (itself a casualty of the present Government). Bitter is not just what publicans serve these days, it is how they feel. For they are caught in a cycle that seems inevitably to lead to more closures.

The less people can drink, the more pubs pack up. And the more pubs pack up, the longer people must drive to reach those that are still open. The longer the journey to reach the pub, the less likely customers are to undertake it. And so it goes on.

I doubt that the police can achieve much more from their already astoundingly successful campaign against drink driving. There cannot be anyone in Britain who does not know that he or she should not drink and drive. Unfortunately, some people will always persist.

They will do so whether the limit is 80mg per 100 millilitres of blood (as at present), or 50mg (as has been proposed). Point zero, in terms of offending, will never be reached.

If the problem really is perceived to be worse in rural areas, a better solution would be for the Government to improve public transport and local facilities to a level at which country people do not need to get into their cars.

Clive Aslet is the Editor of Country Life.



For those who live in remote areas, different social rules apply. With little or no public transport, country dwellers are typically obliged to take the car when dropping in on friends — and take the back roads on the way home

## Shorn of my driving licence and my dignity



Magnus Linklater with his bus timetable. "As I left court I felt numbed by injustice"

Whatever happened to the idea of throwing yourself on the mercy of the court? Is leniency a forgotten virtue? Doesn't compassion count any more? Personally, I blame Jack Straw and his tough-on-crime campaign. It has obviously got the magistrates on the run.

I speak as one who has emerged, sadder but wiser, from the British judicial process, shorn of my driving licence and my dignity, an innocent victim of the great speed camera blight.

Well, guilty, as it happens, but I claim discrimination. In short, why is it that my wife, whose crime, I submit, was surely far graver, was able to plead mitigating circumstances when her case came up recently, while my powerful plea for clemency fell on deaf ears?

And since Mr Straw talks earnestly about being tough on the causes of crime, let me explain the background, which was so brutally ignored in Edinburgh District Court Number One last Wednesday. I blame it on my upbringing. When I was young, a 30mph limit was more of a challenge than a restriction. You reckoned that if there was no copper in sight you were probably safe. And even if you were caught at 40 or even 50, you could argue your case with a human being. The speedometer was faulty, you had been told on good authority that it was 10mph adrift, you were dashing to the aid of your sick auntie, good heavens is there a speed limit, I can't tell you how sorry I am, etc.

You can't argue with a speed camera, as Magnus Linklater discovered to his cost

thanks to a particularly unforgetting camera which I passed from time to time at various unsatisfactory speeds such as 47 or 51, slowing down to 30 as soon as it gave its tell-tale double flash, vowing not to do it again, and trying to explain that I had been distracted by some immensely important journalistic assignment.

There is a popular myth that these cameras have no film in them because they are too expensive to operate. I can now confirm that this is indeed a myth, or possibly that they are loaded only when word gets round that I am on the road, a vendetta of unexplained origin, or that 3.40pm on a Wednesday, 9.20pm on a Friday and 7am on Sunday are deemed to be hit periods.

Whatever the explanation, the net result is that by the time my case came up, the evidence amassed on my licence suggested that I was a serial speedster, a recidivist incapable of rehabilitation. There were four cases to be taken into consideration, over the past three years. I could just hear the magistrate intoning something about society not being able to tolerate delinquency on this scale. I decided I needed legal advice.

carry on driving. Since my crimes were mere misdemeanours in comparison, and my circumstances at least as compelling, I felt I was on safe ground.

Nevertheless, I thought it best to employ a solicitor to plead my case. It was, in my estimation, a powerful one. As he rose to explain why, without my car, the world of journalism would reel, the artistic life of Scotland would be stifled, the family reduced to penury, and so forth, I thought I detected a glint of sympathy in the eye of the magistrate. He even seemed to

be nodding approval. A half-smile of understanding played across his lips. My brief explained that, despite my appalling record, I was at heart a decent citizen, a victim of circumstance rather than a wilful offender. Removing my only means of transport would be a body-blow.

My work, he said, required me to set off on unexpected assignments at any hour of day or night; as Chairman of the Scottish Arts Council, I was in constant demand, ministering to the cultural needs of the nation; and as a father and bread-winner I was the glue that held the family together. In retrospect I may have misread the glint of sympathy. The nodding may have indi-

cated boredom rather than compassion. At the time, however, I took comfort from the fact that as my solicitor sat down, the magistrate asked for a recess. Plainly, I guessed, he needed time to prepare a little speech of commiseration, before handing me back my licence, now clean as a whistle.

When he returned, I was asked to stand. He said: "Your licence will be removed for six months. Fined sixty pounds. Next case."

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# Stamp of an eclectic collection

The author Leslie Thomas has been a stamp lover since childhood, and knows just where to indulge his passion. Michael Cable reports



Collectors from all over the world visit Dauwalders of Salisbury

Sex, skulduggery and the supernatural are not the sort of things normally associated with stamp collecting — unless, that is, you happen to be blessed with Leslie Thomas's vivid imagination. "You can sit down at home on a gloomy winter's afternoon, open your albums and be transported into another world," he says, browsing around at Dauwalders of Salisbury, his local stamp dealer. "I was outraged the other day when someone on a radio programme I was taking part in suggested, in a rather disparaging way, that stamp collecting was like transporting," he says. "There is no comparison. Stamp collecting is not just a matter of sticking stamps in albums. It's a treasure hunt, a history lesson and a magical mystery tour all in one. It metaphorically takes you out of your armchair and off to faraway places."

Sex came into his stamp collecting at an early age, says the former Barnardo's boy, recalling the exact day in 1945 when he sold his treasured schoolboy collection for the ten shillings needed to take out a girl on his first date.

Skulduggery can be discovered behind some of the rarer oddities beloved of all collectors — like the Nazi propagandist forgeries of British stamps with the Star of David substituted for the royal crown and with the hammer and sickle worked into the "d" denoting the peace value.

As for the supernatural, Mr Thomas has an anecdote about a woman who, knowing of his interest in stamps, invited him round to take a look at her late husband's

collection and then, rather nervously, produced a photograph taken at his funeral in which the deceased could be seen standing among the mourners.

"She was understandably disturbed by what seemed like a ghostly apparition but turned out to be a photographic double exposure," he says. "It gave me the idea for a storyline that I was later able to use in my novel *Kensington Heights*."

After selling that early boyhood stamp collection it was many years before the 66-year-old bestselling author of *The Virgin Soldiers*, *Tropic of Ruin* and the recently published *Chloe's Song*, rediscovered his interest.

"I had both my hips replaced about ten years ago, which really incapacitated me for a while, and I was looking around for something to keep me occupied," Mr Thomas says. "I happened to come across an old stamp album that had belonged to one of my children, and it was like meeting up with an old lover."

By chance, Dauwalders of Salisbury, one of the country's leading stamp shops, happens to be located a pleasant ten-minute stroll along the river from Mr Thomas's home, a beautiful Georgian house in the city's Cathedral Close.

The shop's owner, Paul Dauwalder, a lifelong stamp enthusiast, started dealing when he was still at school, advertising in comics, such as *Hotspur*. He opened his first shop in Salisbury in 1970 and has been in the present premises for the past 16 years.

Only a fraction of the stamp shops that existed when Mr Dauwalder started are still in



Owner Paul Dauwalder helps Leslie Thomas (right) to sort through specimens of the author's speciality — Victorian and Edwardian "Great Britain Used Abroad" stamps

business because younger generations have turned to other interests. As a result, collectors are drawn to Dauwalders from all over the world. "Some people come to Salisbury for a couple of days, staying in a hotel and leaving their family to go walking and cycling in the New Forest while they spend their time browsing in the shop," Mr Dauwalder says. "He and his staff of 12, nearly all dedicated collectors, eagerly look forward to Mr Thomas's regular visits. "He always has some terrific stories to tell," Mr Dauwalder says.

Mr Thomas, the author of 35 books since *The Virgin Soldiers* brought overnight success, specialises in what is catalogued under the heading "Great Britain Used Abroad" — mostly Victorian and Edwardian stamps, franked in places such as South America, the Middle East and the West Indies in the days before these countries had their own stamps.

"I also have a general collection that I have labelled 'oddities and rarities', things that just take my fancy because they are unusual or sometimes simply because they are

my favourite shop

aesthetically pleasing," says Mr Thomas. "The most he has ever spent at one time was the £1,000 he paid Mr Dauwalder for the basis of his "Great Britain Used Abroad" collection. He rarely spends more

than £100 for a stamp and has set a limit on stamp collecting of £200 a month, the amount he receives from a pension policy he took out years ago. "I'm sometimes tempted to go beyond my means, but you have to be sensible," he says.

Big collections can fetch £100,000 or more but Mr Thomas has never looked on his hobby as an investment. "That doesn't make sense unless you are prepared to spend thousands of pounds, in which case you have to keep the stamps in a safe at the bank — and where's the enjoyment in that?"

His is a much more romantic attitude, reflected in the actions of one of his heroes. In *The Adventures of Goodnight and Loving*, George Goodnight decides to disappear and start a new life — and then sells off his collection, stamp by stamp, to finance his travels around the world.

An inveterate traveller and travel writer, it's not hard to see where Mr Thomas got that idea.

● *Dauwalders of Salisbury*, 92-94 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7QY (01723 412100). Open: Mon-Sat, 9am-5.30pm

**GADGETS**

**Rookie Stix**

SOME GADGETS seem so pointless they leave you incredulous. The absurd Seating Planner, for instance, consists of two small leather discs sewn together, with an overlapping lip into which can be placed wipe-clean name tags. Ideal for those who have not yet mastered paper.

What would the Chinese make of Rookie Stix? These training chopsticks moulded from a single length of plastic are quite springy, making rice ricochet off in all directions if your fingers slip.

The Handset Untangler aims to resolve tangled handset wiring on telephones, but sadly it hardly moves, leaving you to do it manually.

**TIM WAPSHOTT**

● Seating Planner, £14.99, from Pressure for Men (01295 750100). Rookie Stix, 99p, from Taylor & Harty (0181-942 9361). Handset Untangler, £4.07, from Tandy (01922 433033).

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## Get into hot water

**WINTER WARMERS**

It is amazing what some people will take to bed when the temperature drops a couple of degrees. Dogs, cats, even fish and their tanks can all be found lurking under the covers.

Hot-water bottles today are no longer purely functional items relegated to the bed. Graham & Green's fake leopard-skin bottle is the perfect fashion accessory for those suffering poor circulation and can also double as a handbag. Should you want a hot-water bottle to serve its purpose, the most advanced ones on the market are the microwaveable warmers from the John Lewis Partnership and Innovations.

**LEFT:** Animal hot-water bottles are ideal for small children to cuddle up to and double up during summer as bed buddies. A choice of duck, hippo or dog, £16, from Marks & Spencer (0171-935 4422)

**LEFT:** Innovative and practical, the heat-wave bedwarmer is heated in the microwave in minutes, can be handled immediately afterwards without burning fingers, and stays at a constant temperature for up to eight hours, £14.75, from the John Lewis Partnership (0171-629 7711); £14.95 from Innovations (ref. 40200) (0990 807060)

**LEFT:** Because of its size, the plastic fish hot-water bottle, £4, from American Retro (0171-734 3477), makes a novelty handwarmer

These eliminate the risk of scalding while juggling the bottle and kettle and will remain at a constant temperature for up to eight hours. Ideal for anyone who has the time to stay in bed for that long.

Good advice for hot-water-bottle users from Boots: never fill to the top, or with boiling water, which can cause the rubber to perish. With care, a hot-water bottle should last for years.

**ABOVE:** The heart-shaped hot-water bottle, £18.50, from Barclay & Bodie (0171-372 5705) is uncomfortable to hold but is fun for lonely hearts or loved ones. Also available at £19 including p&p from Bliss (01789 400077) and £18.95 from Ocean (0800 132985)

**RIGHT:** The fake leopard-skin hot-water bottle is luxurious and stylish. Also available in dark mink, lamb and snow leopard fake fur, £28.50, from Graham & Green (0171-727 4694)

**LEFT:** Choose between an aquarium hot-water bottle (ref. 30023), £12.95 from Presents Direct (0171-371 7017) and £9.95 from The Source (0171-937 2626), or a transparent hot-water bottle with stars, £10, from House of Fraser (0171-963 2236)

**ABOVE:** For Wallace and Gromit fans, the Shaun the Sheep hot-water bottle, £18, from Boots (0845 0708090) is essential. With extra padding at the front, you can barely feel the bottle once full, but the warmth is considerable

**SHOPPING NEWS**

■ IF YOU do not have your 1998 diary yet, why not take a trip to the latest, biggest branch of Paperchase. At St Mary's Gate, in the heart of Manchester, the shop has a stainless steel facade and glass atrium, plus an espresso bar so you can relax and enjoy your stationary buys. For more details call 0161-639 1300.

■ CELEBRATE the Chinese new year of the tiger with one of Van Peterson's sterling silver pendants (£125), each of which depicts one of the 12 animals from the calendar engraved on the front, and the Chinese symbol on the reverse. See them at Liberty, or the Van Peterson store at 194-196 Walton Street, London SW3 (0171-584 1101).

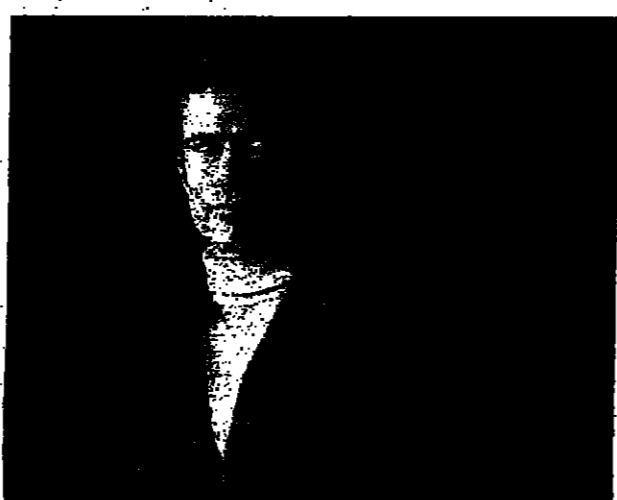
■ WHY NOT treat yourself to flowers all year round from English Garden's hassle-free mail-order catalogue. You can order deliveries of exotic potted orchids, potted hyacinth narcissi or fresh seasonal flowers. The 24-hour order line is on 0800 203000.

■ UPDATE: furniture designer Tom Dixon starts as head of design for Habitat UK this month, so look out for a host of fresh ideas from late 1998 ... February sees Swedish style-shop Blue Door expand its premises at 74 Church Road, SW13 (0181-748 9785) — watch out for Maji's new range of cosmetics next month.

**JUDITH WILSON**

cloth real

# Cloth of the real man



Until this winter there were very few men who could get away with wearing corduroy. Most were country workmen, crusty academics, left-wing students — and, of course, journalists, who have traditionally worn it as a sign that they're tough men-of-the-world types, not bothered with the formality of wool or the pondiness of silk.

This season, though, it is not only suave journalists — like those portrayed by Robert Redford in *All The President's Men* or in Lou Grant's Seventies TV series — who are strutting the stuff. Designers from Vivienne Westwood to Valentino have had both boy models and macho men parading catwalks in corded fabric, from traditional trousers and jackets to evening coats and three-piece suits.

Valentino's V Zone label collection included a wine-coloured cord mandarin-collar jacket; Romeo Gigli coffee-hued three-piece suits; and Missoni raspberry jackets teamed with its trademark knitwear. The colours, too, were far from traditional: there were bright reds teamed with mulberry, mustards with burgundy, orange with pink.

For those who love the fabric, the sudden fashionability is, if not exactly a relief (real cord-men don't bother about fashion), then proof that the world is at last coming round to their way of thinking.

"Cord is a very good mid-point when it comes to dressing. It feels quite casual yet is acceptable for semi-formal occasions," says cord-wearer and *Times* writer Alan Franks. "It is also very hardwearing; the trousers I bought in the Forties lasted ages before they were threadbare."

Many wearers — from intellectuals such as Jonathan Miller to comic Ben Elton and the rocker Jarvis Cocker — might not cite durability as a reason for buying the fabric of kings (*corde du roi*), but the silky feel, the baggy shape and the texture that they like.

Although cord connoisseurs never wear their suit jacket and trousers separately, the fabric is perfect with silk, moleskin, cotton or leather. As most of the styles are classic, they will last until the fabric's next reappearance. Not that "corders" will care about that — they'll wear it anyway.

LISA GRAINGER

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Cream needlecord jacket and trousers, £399, Joseph, 74 Sloane Avenue, SW3 (0171-580 6200). Green needlecord shirt, £155, Prada, Browns, 23 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-491 7833)

Black sweater, £65, John Smedley, Selfridges, W1 (0171-580 5075). Red cord jeans, £75, Paul Smith, 9-11 Langley Court, WC2 (0171-379 7133)

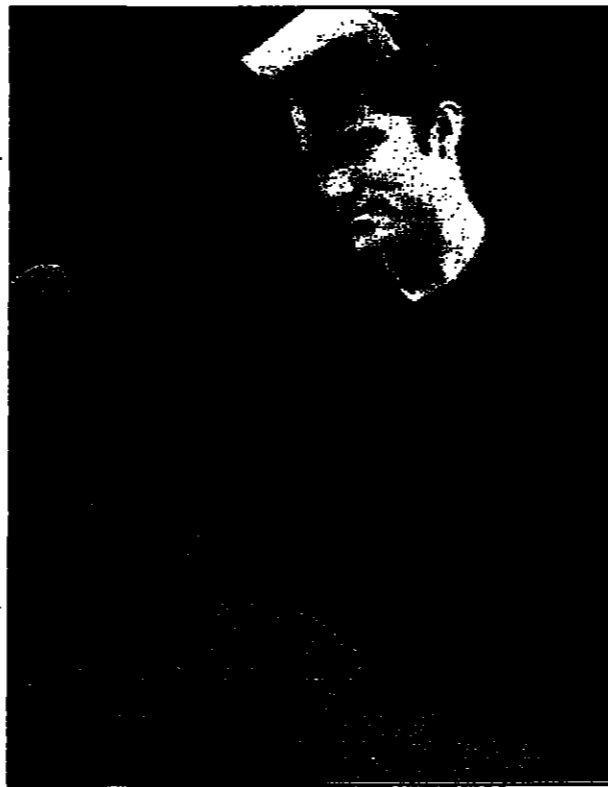
Brown jumbo cord coat, £220, Agnès B, 35-36 Floral Street, WC2 (0171-379 1999). Green sweater, £159, Brora, 344 King's Road, SW3 (0171-736 9944). Indigo denim jeans, £72, Byblos, Harrods, SW1 (0171-730 1234)

Dark green needlecord jacket and matching trousers, £775, Prada, Browns, as before. Mustard and green rollneck, £162, Byblos, as before. Black and beige leather shoes, £250, Cesare Paciotti, 11a Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-493 3766)

Burnt orange cord jacket, part of a suit, £810, Gigli, Browns, as before. Pale blue sweater, £65, John Smedley, Selfridges, 400 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-580 5075)

Blue cord shirt, £89, Mulberry, 41-42 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 3900). Denim jeans, £72, Byblos, as before

Photos: Richard Burns. Grooming: Sally Kvalheim for Jo Hansford (0171-495 7774). Styling: Amandip Uppel. Furnishings: Mulberry Home Collection (0171-352 1937)



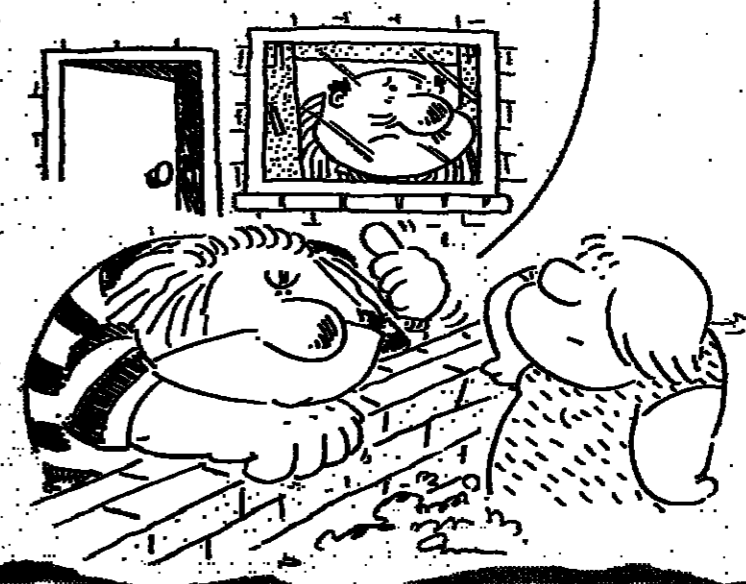
### THREE OF A KIND

Soft, dark, comfortable slip-on shoes complete every man's winter wardrobe. Here are three of the best. LG



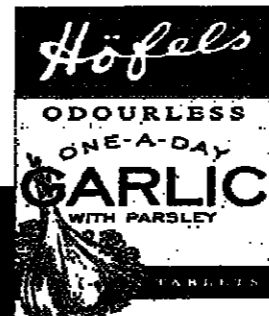
TOP LEFT: Black leather shoes with silver bar snaffle, £66, Ravel, 184-188 Oxford St, W1 (0171-436 3126)  
 ABOVE: Light brown grosgrain shoes, £155, Armani Polini, 35 Brook St, W1 (0171-629 7606)  
 LEFT: Chocolate suede shoes, £150, Russell & Bromley, 24-25 New Bond St, W1 (0171-629 6903)

HÖFELS GARLIC AND PARSLEY HELPED HIS COLD — BUT HE'S STILL A RIGHT DRIP.



**Höfels**  
**GARLIC WITH PARSLEY**

Everyone feels under the weather when they've got a cold. And sometimes there's no sympathy either. Fortunately Höfels Garlic & Parsley — a traditional herbal remedy — can help stop colds getting you down, by helping to relieve the symptoms naturally. Garlic and Parsley have traditionally benefited generations of users, and now with Höfels Garlic and Parsley, those benefits, are available in a convenient, one a day formulation, that's easy to take all winter long. Help drips dry this winter with Höfels Garlic and Parsley.



Always read the label

Höfels Herbal Supplements

Natural health care for this day & age

SEVEN SEAS Health Care

# Proof of the pudding is in the red book

The new Michelin guide to eating out in the UK arrives this month. Dominic Bradbury explains the mystique of the gourmet's bible

**M**r Bibendum is blowing out his birthday candles. This year it's the 100th anniversary of Michelin's rubber-ribbed man — looking a touch less inflated after a slimming redesign — and the 25th anniversary of the French tyre company's little red British edition, the *Michelin Guide to Hotels and Restaurants in Great Britain and Ireland*.

While Bibendum has witnessed a revolution in the way we motor since he was conceived by brothers André and Edouard Michelin, over the past quarter of a century the *UK Michelin Guide* has recorded an equally important revolution in British cooking and eating.

When the new guide is published on January 21 it will end a tense year for Britain's top chefs. Will Pied à Terre and Gordon Ramsay's Aubergine go up to the magic three stars? Will Marco Pierre White keep his three stars now that he is installed at the Meridien Hotel's Oak Room? Will the unstoppable Michel Roux keep his three stars at the Waterside Inn for an incredible 14th year? For an ambitious chef, the *Michelin Guide* is the Oscars, the Booker and the Nobel prizes rolled into one.

In 1974, when the first British guide came out, our cuisine was at a low ebb. It was the age of the prawn cocktail, scampi in a basket, chicken Kiev, duck à l'orange — and it was awful. The restaurant scene was badly polarised, with the best, usually French, eateries at the top end of the market dominated by Jag-driving, moustachioed business execs while the rest of us trooped through the Berni Inns and Trust House Forte plastic cafés.

There were just 25 one-star entries ('a very good restaurant in its category') in the UK guide for the class of '74, and

no entries for two-star ('excellent cooking, worth a detour'), or the magical three ('excellent cuisine, worth a special journey'). That, compared to 624 starred restaurants in France, 17 of them three-star. Of the 25 UK entries, many were serving French cooking.

Times have changed. "Modern British" cuisine is now world class, our food is as eclectic and adventurous as one might hope to find anywhere. The restaurant scene is far more democratic and accessible, underlined by the rise of the "gastro pub", where you find excellent food at affordable prices. And Michelin has been attempting to mirror the sea change in its red book in Britain: in 1997 we were up to 67 one-star, nine two-star and four three-star restaurants.

There is no denying guide's continuing status as an arbiter of fine cooking, despite flaws in the Michelin machine.

**J**ulian Barnes, the novelist, Francophile and former restaurant critic of the *Tatler*, says: "The maps are brilliant and as a hotel guide it's very useful, but as a restaurant guide it takes some cracking — it is a book whose rules you take some time to absorb."

Its authority is built on professionalism and mystery. Michelin inspectors are widely regarded as thorough and incorruptible, and they closely guard their anonymity. There are nine inspectors in Britain, plus the guide's editor, known in the trade as *Derek*: his real name is Derek.

"I wouldn't know any of them if they came through the door," says Paul Heathcote, who has two stars for his eponymous Lancashire restaurant. "They are very hard to spot — one even came with his grandmother. Once a year they announce themselves after they have had coffee. But they are very non-committal." Heathcote, like everybody

# nunc est bibendum



"À VOTRE SANTÉ"

LE PNEU MICHELIN BOIT L'OBSTACLE

Equally feared and respected, the Michelin Guide is, for chefs, the Oscars. Booker and Nobel prizes rolled into one

else, has little idea what criteria the inspectors use, but "consistency" always comes across as a key word — in cooking, service, decor, presentation and staff, which for critics of the Michelin system means too much conservatism and traditionalism. To move from one to two-star, the feeling is that the wine list has to be exceptional, there must be a full complement of staff, including a *maitre d'* plus *sommelier*, and the trappings — the *petit fours*, the linen, the cutlery, flowers, lighting, the soap, towels and spring-fresh toilet paper in the bathrooms — should be near to perfect. For three-stars, Bernard Naeggelen, Michelin's head

man in Paris, says that there also "has to be a personality behind the food that you can feel". In the UK, those personalities are Marco Pierre White, Michel Roux, Nico Ladenis and Pierre Koffman. *Times* columnist Jean Christophe Novelli — opening a new restaurant in Normandy next month — says the Michelin star he earned five years ago, when he was working at Gorden Mill, was his passport to London, and the star awarded last year to the first of his own restaurants, Maison Novelli, saved him from bankruptcy. "The star put me in a different division. You know what the quality and standard will be," he says. His friend

# Drink



Jane MacQuitty  
There's no mystery about it — with a little practice and know-how we can all be expert wine-tasters

## WINE COURSE PART 1

Anyone can taste, serve and drink wine with pleasure. Although the wine world would have us think otherwise, wine is no more complicated than any other annual crop. Like other harvested produce it is subject to climatic and vintage variations, even in hot countries. The choice of variety, soil and site is important too and much depends on the winemaker who crushes the grapes and makes the wine with today's high-tech battery of yeasts, enzymes, oaks and treatments.

All this makes wine a fascinating subject. Yet experience has taught me that, for all the mysteries of nature and science, there is no difference in the way you and I taste. And that is the heart of getting the best from your bottle. The mechanics of tasting, happily, are not complicated. But the process of sniffing, slurping and, for me, usually spitting it out, is worth fine-tuning, as it can double your enjoyment. Start by pouring a good inch

of the leading grape varieties. Be wary of malodorous chemical, or rank, mushroomy odours signs of a faulty bottle; decent shops will be happy to exchange this.

When you taste the wine, take a good slug and slosh it around in your mouth. Making certain you reach the two super-sensitive spots at the back of your tongue. The finish, where you either swallow or spit the wine out, gives you a final impression of the quality. Any wine whose after-taste lingers in the mouth for a slow count to ten is a good one, and truly great bottles can linger for 15 to 20 seconds.

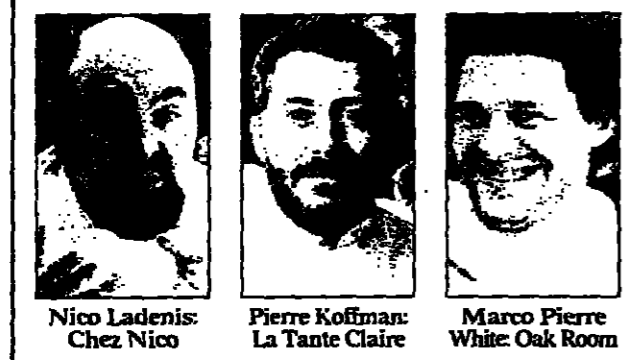
**B**eware of serving white wines icy-cold as this will numb their flavour. Big reds, especially claret, are best served when the bottles are slightly warm to the touch, otherwise their bouquet and palate will remain dumb.

As to the rest of wine's myth and magic, the rules are there to be broken. I often enjoy red wine with full-flavoured fish, such as salmon and tuna. Decanting wine, unless it's a big red or aged port that has thrown a heavy sediment, is a waste of time. Don't bother to cellar any wine costing less than £4.50. A quirky tip if faced with a sea of bottles: choose the one with the longest, least pronounceable name: permanent vergeless is better value than beige every time.

Next week: the great grapes — chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon.



## WIN A MICHELIN THREE-STAR MEAL — OR ONE OF 20 1998 MICHELIN GUIDES



Nico Ladenis: Chez Nico; Pierre Koffman: La Tante Claire; Marco Pierre White: Oak Room

YOU AND A GUEST could be dining free soon at one of Britain's top restaurants. By matching the dishes described below to the chefs (left), who cook them at their restaurants, you could win a three-course meal of the highest quality, with a bottle of wine, courtesy of Weekend. And, for 20 runners up, we have copies of the 1998 *Michelin Guide to Hotels and Restaurants in Great Britain — normally worth £12.99* — to give away. When you have matched the dishes to the chefs, write your solution on a postcard and send it to: Michelin Competition, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN by January 31. No correspondence will be entered into, and the Editor's decision is final.

- 1. WHO COOKS THIS?**  
Adour salmon — fillets of salmon, cooked in goose fat with tomatoes and peppers, served with sautéed Bayonne ham
- 2. WHO COOKS THIS?**  
Contrefilet of Aberdeen Angus "Molly Parkin", marrowbone, confit of shallots and garlic, sauce bordelaise
- 3. WHO COOKS THIS?**  
Pithivier of Pheasant with celeriac purée — a baked pastry dish, served with chestnuts and jus of pheasant

## THE DRINKS THAT TIME FORGOT

### Part 1: The Snowball

ONCE the height of saloon-bar sophistication, nothing has gone off-piste quite like the snowball cocktail, Kate Stronach writes. This concoction for the sweet-toothed did not so much melt away as shoot off the Cresta Run into oblivion. Just the memory of it is enough to make those who once screamed for more curl up with shame. It stands now like an abandoned Beirut sky resort, too abominable for today's taste buds.

So steep and complete a demise, however, must afford this concoction some iconic status. An early, gin-based version was created for a bobsleighing club but it was a large measure of Advocaat — the yellow Dutch liqueur — with lime cordial and a float of lemonade (in a highball glass) which proved so popular in the night clubs and ski resorts of Playboy Europe.

By the early 1970s it was popping up in pubs faster than an Ossie Clark copy. A battery-operated swizzle stick — a must for any bar — was even created in its honour.



The *Savvy Cocktail Book* set the snowball rolling down-hill by mocking its creation as "women's work". No red-blooded male would be seen dead ordering the girly tipple. In truth, so relentlessly good-time a drink would have been a soft target for the mockers and begudgers of any era. The other undeniable design flaw in the Snowball was that, although stunning to look at, it was near impossible to drink more than two without feeling sick.

No one drinks it now. Perhaps it is just waiting for the good times to roll again. Even with the millennium around the corner, however, predictions of a revival would be seriously premature.



Top tips: the chef Henry Harris shows the short cuts

## HENRY HARRIS'S CHEAT OF THE WEEK

### Squaring up to a stock dilemma

YOU can't beat the taste of fresh stock. In the past every domestic kitchen would have a stock pot on the go, but somewhere along the way this ritual became lost.

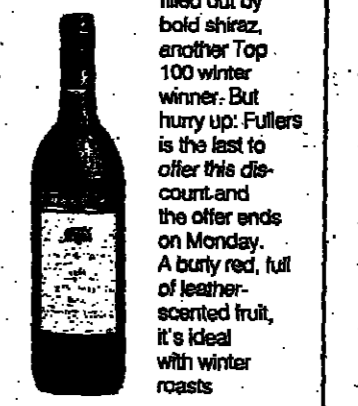
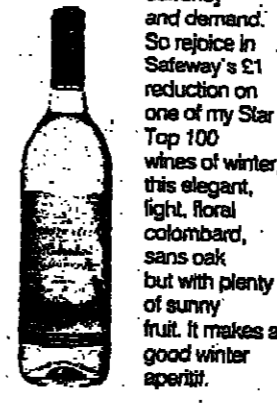
Know Tom Yum cubes are always in my larder at home, with good reason. Thai soups are a treat but collecting all the fresh ingredients (tamarind, lemon grass, galangal and Kaffir lime leaves) can take an age, and you always have to buy more than you need. Tom Yum cubes contain all of these ingredients and, when teamed with a poultry carcass and a few extras, make a fast and authentic oriental soup.

- Tom Yum soup**
- 1 large chicken carcass
  - 2 large onions
  - 2 sticks of celery
  - 2 lemons
  - 2 packets of Tom Yum stock cubes
  - Nam Pla (Thai fish sauce)
  - 2 shallots
  - 1 bunch fresh coriander

## STAR BUYS OF THE WEEK

- 1997 Australian Oaked Colombari**, Thomas Hardy and Sons, South Eastern Australia, Safeway, £2.99 until Jan 18
- 1996 Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon-Shiraz**, Fullers, down to £4.49 until Jan 12; elsewhere, £4.99

**DECENT** Australian whites are hard to come by, because of short vintages, a strong currency and demand. So rejoice in Safeway's £1 reduction on one of my Star Top 100 wines of winter, this elegant, light, floral colombari, sans oak but with plenty of sunny fruit. It makes a good winter aperitif.



**BEST OF THE BEST:**  
Safeway January deals are some of the best, with its plummy 1997 Silvan Merlot-Pinot Noir Bulgar blend down 50p to £2.29; £1 each off the juicy 1998 Young Vatted Tempranillo (£2.49), the ripe 1997 Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon (£2.99) and the 1998 Puglian Red (£2.69). Try, too, the Safeway 1998 Sicilian Red, £2.29, the £1-off hearty 1996 Côtes du Rhône for £2.25, or the £1-off Oak Aged Claret at £3.99



'Instead of a pigsty or henhouse being the mark of a poor living, let them become symbols of excellence to be envied not pitied'

As the season of bulging waists and torpor fades into the past, I hate to mention the D word: diet. I know this four-letter word may be as abhorrent to you as it is to me...

Weighty argument for my new diet

exercise machines, buy instead a shiny spade, and watch those pounds of guilt melt away. Easier, I admit, for country dwellers than city prisoners...

DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

I can only say, grow up: meat-eaters could do far more for animal welfare by rearing and eating their own than by rattling tins on flag days.

never ask, we can grow increasingly suspicious. If you have room for a pig, fine; if it is going to be no more than a row of lettuce, at least it's a start.

ers, who are selling directly from smallholdings and farms to your doorstep. They can be your conscience and your labourer. They have already thought through the deficiencies of intensive food production...

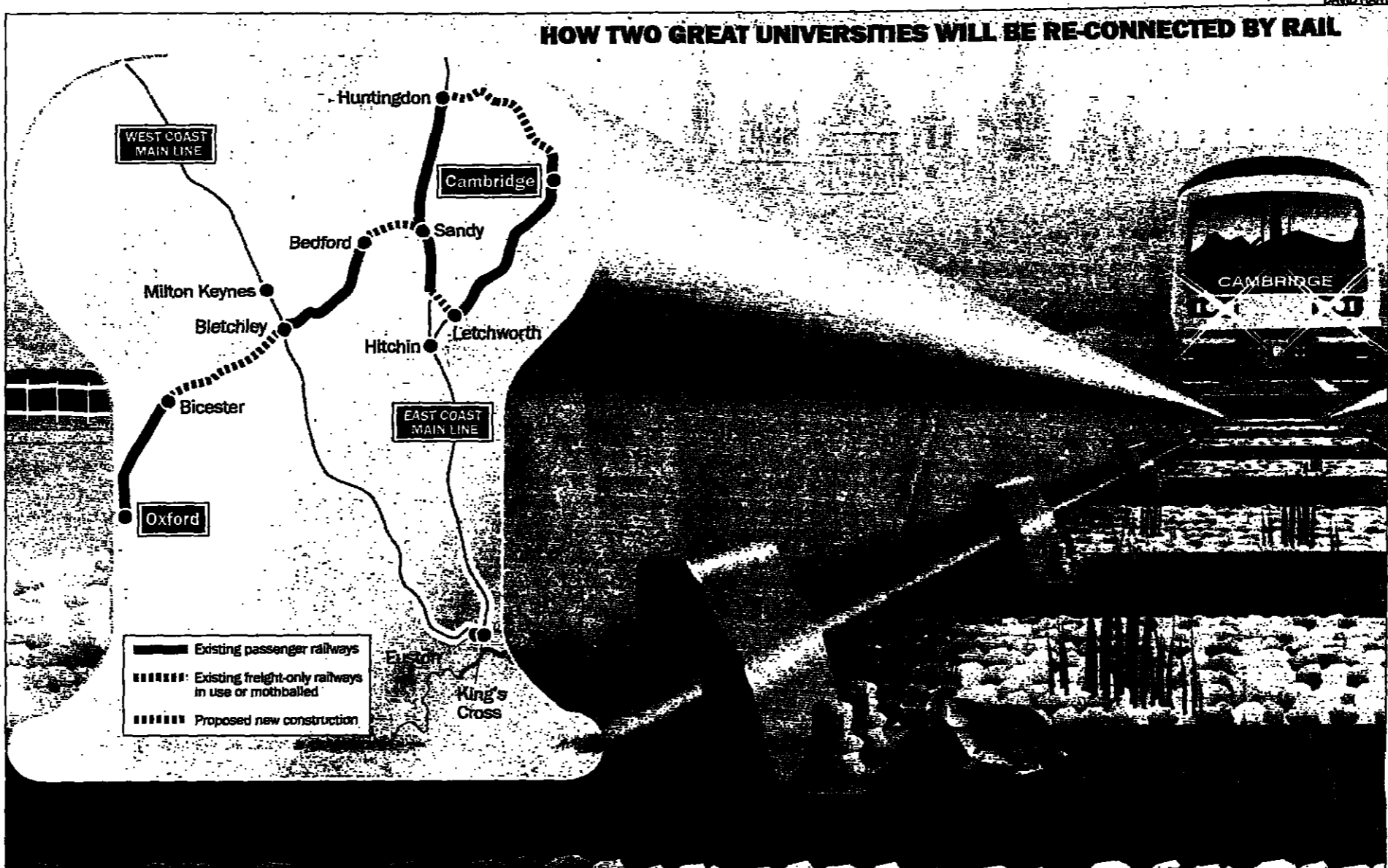
Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters, of all kinds. Address them to: Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E14 9XN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.

Taking the past track to a new age of rail

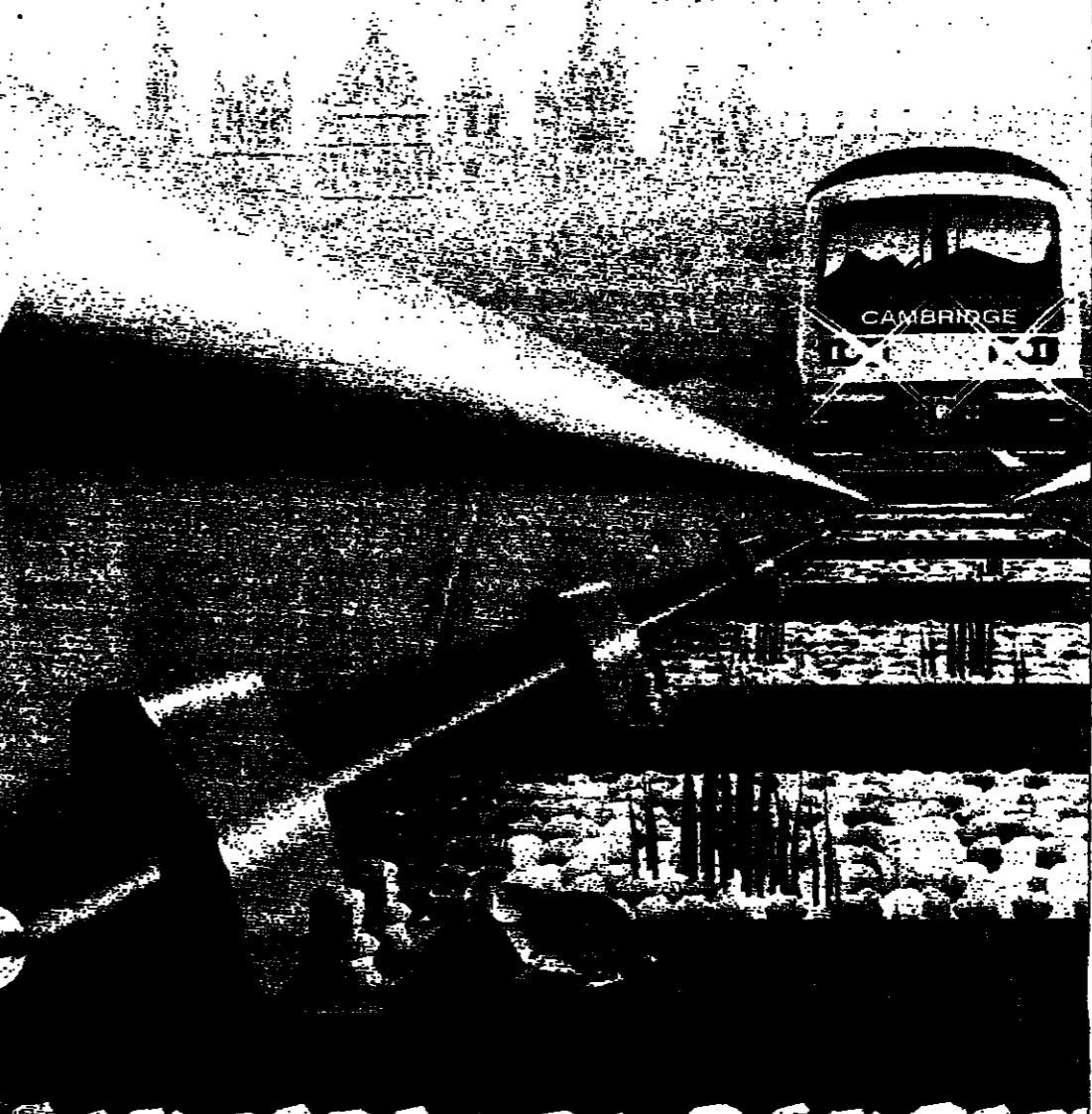
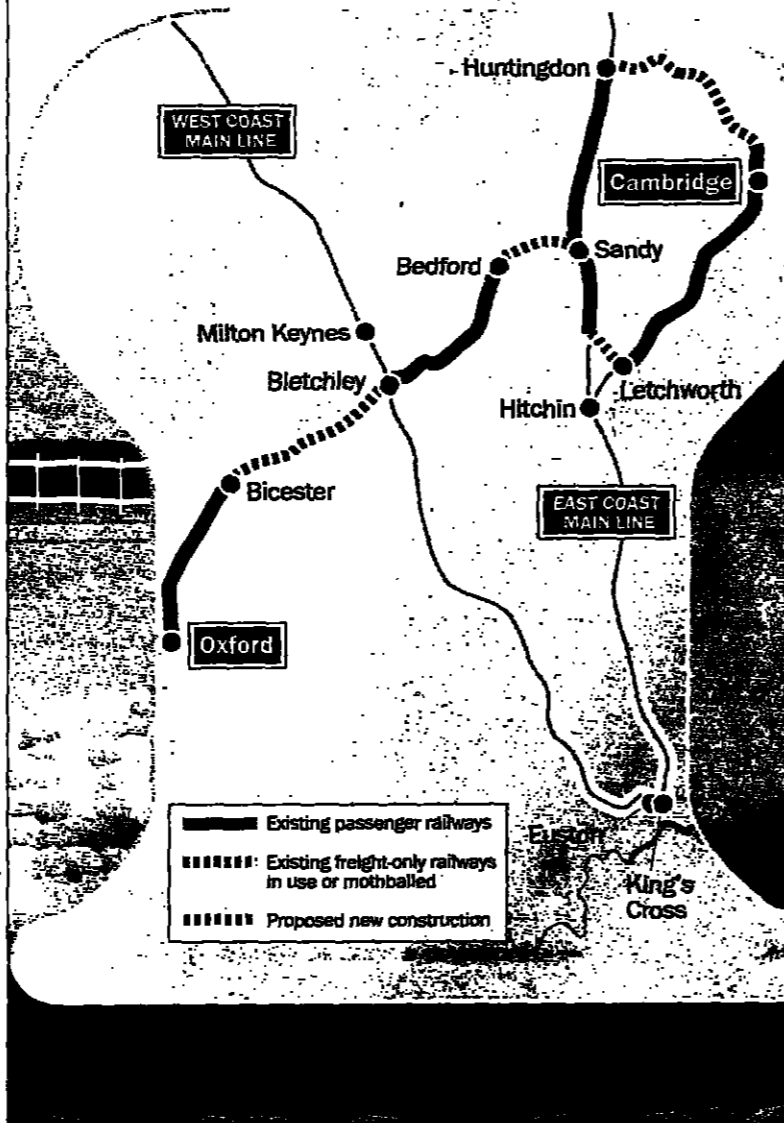
Michael Binyon discovers that old lines can turn out to be the best

One of the most expensive mistakes of the Beeching era is about to be rectified. A rural railway, linking Oxford and Cambridge, is set to reopen 30 years after it was closed in the drastic pruning of Britain's rail network.

Freight, regarded for years by British Rail as a lost cause, is now streaming back to town, boosted by international trainloads pouring out of the Channel Tunnel.



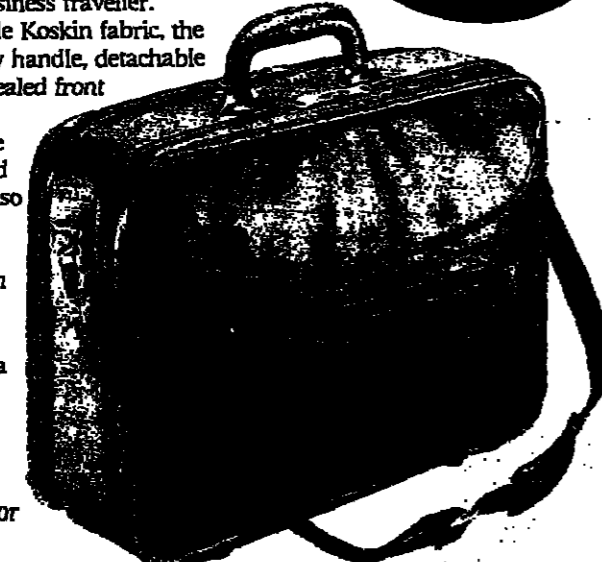
HOW TWO GREAT UNIVERSITIES WILL BE RE-CONNECTED BY RAIL



EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES Pierre Cardin cabin case only £29.99 inc p&p

Today, The Times in association with Pierre Cardin, gives you the opportunity to buy this stylish overnight cabin case for only £29.99, saving a third off the mrrp of £45.

£15 OFF MRRP



PIERRE CARDIN CABIN CASE ORDER FORM with fields for name, address, phone, and payment details.

CHANGING TIMES

In the realm of the silent killer

I WAS walking through a wood of oaks and rhododendrons one day last week when a tremendous commotion broke out. A jay started screaming, a magpie cackled loudly and a blackbird gave a whole string of shrill, clattering cries.

FEATHER REPORT



Sparrowhawk drowns a jay

field. I have seen them searching for skylarks over the young corn. They also patrol the shoreline, and catch redshanks. The males are more furtive, but not long ago I was looking at some duck on a lake when a powder-blue male sparrowhawk passed right across my field-glasses.

The new consortium includes 25 local authorities along the route. If it chooses the central option, it will also have to look at the cost of compensating those who bought sections of the disused track, and the compulsory purchase of houses erected on the old railway.

open field in Yorkshire and taken to a nearby beck. The hawks all seem to have been different birds and to have learnt the murderous trick for themselves.

They are also very silent in winter, though you can occasionally hear their rattling alarm calls - "kek-kek-kek". They become more conspicuous when they pair up in April. During the winter they sometimes soar high in the sky, surveying the countryside below for bird movements, but in spring this soaring becomes a regular feature of their behaviour.

OTHER NEW LINES

The reopening of the Oxford-Cambridge line is not the only one planned. There are proposals to reopen a through route across the Peak District, via Buxton, as a way of boosting access to this beautiful area while keeping down car traffic.







Natalie, Kate and Abigail (main picture, left to right) shape up for advice and find that headgear can be more pheasant than pleasant, and that waders are worth a struggle. Finally, the Margaret Rutherford look is back for someone

# Tweeiding and weeding out the townnies

Devout urbanite Kate Stronach and friends leave their Levi's at home and learn how to dress for a weekend in the country

When the invitation arrived, it looked harmless enough. Within, however, lay an odorous concept the countryside. It mentioned three country activities that numb my urban blood, namely huntin', shootin' and, well, walkin'. It's not that I dislike our verdant isles — *The Quiet Man* is a favourite, and I never miss a *Marple*. It's just that I prefer my great outdoors to be a pleasant little park somewhere, perhaps with a cafe, or, at a push, an overgrown garden in Highgate. Anything more bucolic and I tend to get a headache or my shoes dirty. You can never get

a taxi and, well, the last time I wandered out of London I became the whipping girl for those get-of-my-land types one finds in hedgerows, because I assumed a stirrup cup was a brassiere. Despite these doubts, I took a deep breath and sent off the unlikely I-can't-wait note, fears abated by the news that two glamorous models were, like me, to be cajoled into the Marie Antoinette role at a friend's country seat for the weekend. As one of these, Natalie (all six foot of her), put it; "it's the perfect excuse for some credit-card bashing". Well, Abigail and Galliano just will not do when it comes

to trekking the fells, felling the treks, or whatever it is people do out there. We were in need of advice, however, on what the provinces would be wearing this season: and so to Farlow's Country Girl clothing emporium, Pall Mall. Sue Simpson, bless her, is manageress at Farlow's. If anyone could save us from sticking out of the ruddy crowd like the ruddy proverbial, 'twas she. She didn't bat an eyelid at our arrival despite the fact that Natalie was in a

tight, sexy suit and I was in Levi's, though I heard a small shriek of terror at the measurements of Abigail (the third of our party). I would question whether there is a size-six-to-eight market outside London. We stared in horror for five minutes. I don't think I have seen so much brown tweed since they re-ran Sherlock Holmes on TV. And why would anyone want to wear something that looks like a pheasant on their head in the shooting season?

Natalie and Abigail soon got into the spirit. They whinnied around like the pro-dressers they are, gasping in delight at the abundant cashmere and seamen's hose. Knowing only too well that in tweeds I would start to ape Margaret Rutherford, I held back. I could only be coaxed out of my strictly casual, Johnny Town Mouse closet with the promise of waders: those deeply sexy, full-bodied wellies you see on the covers of *Anglers' Weekly* and other, shall we say, less upstanding organs. As I struggled with the "wrong trousers" (talcum powder helps), Natalie had picked a rather sexy shooting outfit with, as she put it "don't mess with me" breeks, these being those half-trousered things that golfers used to wear in Jeeves and Wooster. How she managed to look like a Bond girl in plus-fours I'll never know. The diminutive Abigail had gone all respectable on us (as

an American, she can do this when faced with a countryside no bigger than New Jersey). She emerged from the changing room feeling like "a vicar's wife at the WI", blue corduroys and polo neck all topped with a waxed "Jessica" (it would be) hat. She looked like a sweet-faced schoolboy, and I doubt there's a landlord in London who'd serve her the lunchtime vodkas. Finally, with everyone else dressed, I was hoisted to my feet for the verdict. My hopes of looking rather, erm, *intrepid* were dashed when Natalie (choking with laughter) spluttered: "It's very... Margaret Rutherford-goes-fishing!"

**BEST DRESSED**

Natalie wears: Chrysalis Loden shooting coat £350, Tattersall breeks £80, Hodgson cowi-neck sweater £76, Asyrica waistcoat £68. Kate wears: Lochaber sweater £22, Simms fishing vest £39.95, Ocean chest waders £89.95, Brazy fishing bag £35.95. Abigail wears: corduroy trousers £24.95, roll-neck sweater £33.95, J. Partridge tweed quilt jacket £185. Dents gloves £16, Barbour brogues £70. All from Farlow's, 5 Pall Mall, SW1 (0117-839 2423)

**ON THE SPOT: GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

*Rural recommendations*

**The place:** the maypole at Coopers Hill, Cranham.

**The view:** to the west are outstanding views of the Severn valley and; to the south and east, Cranham Woods.

**Afficionados:** fit walkers with packed lunches.

**Historical interest:** Coopers Hill is the setting for an annual competition in which 7lb Double Gloucester cheeses are rolled down the 200-yard hill, which has a gradient of 1:2. The origins are thought to be pagan but first records date from the early 1800s. The cheeses, which are protected by a wooden casing and decorated with ribbons, can get up to 70mph, and minor injuries are not uncommon.

**Time to visit:** on dry days and the May Bank Holiday. OS ref: 893/148 on sheet 163.

**How to get there:** take the Stroud road from Brockworth, near Gloucester and Cheltenham, or the A46 from Stroud, park at Prinknash Abbey and follow the footpath.

**Also nearby:** Coopers Hill Nature Reserve and the Cotswold Way.

**DEBORAH KING**

Wildlife lovers are concerned about the treatment of thousands of barn owls in captivity. Sue Corbett reports

## They don't give a hoot

Although the good news about the barn owl is that there are lots of them, the bad news is that most of them are in the wrong place. This handsome hunter is the fifth most popular British bird among members of the RSPB, most of whom would be horrified to learn that the UK now has twice as many barn owls in captivity as it has in the wild — 20,000 captive birds against 5,000 wild breeding pairs. The problem is that the owls breed so well in captivity. "It is not unusual for there to be two, or sometimes three, broods of four or more owlets a year," warns the Department of the Environment. Captive-bred barn owls may be sold in pet shops, car-boot sales or through local free magazines. The lucky ones enjoy spacious aviaries and ready supplies of mice and day-old chicks. But Sue Dewar, the national co-ordinator of the Hawk and Owl Trust's barn owl conservation network, says: "Far too many birds are bred and sold as pets, and I have been called out on more than one occasion to witness barn owls confined in parrot cages or rabbit hutches. To say I find this distressing is an understatement." Vincent Jones of Brockworth, Gloucestershire, finds it equally distressing, and has sparked off a national controversy with his solution. He wants more of the captive birds to be released under licence, but this idea has irritated the RSPB and the Hawk and Owl Trust, which believe that there is not enough suitable habitat to accommodate such releases. Undeterred, Mr Jones, who runs a

slate and tile reclamation business, contends: "This bird has no representation at all. It is ignored, and it is now becoming a cheap toy. I give it about three years and it's going to be like a cat and dog at Christmas, where people are going to acquire one, and just let it go when they don't want it any more." Mr Jones bought his girlfriend a barn owl, now seven months old, for £35 through an advertisement in a local paper. "While I was with the person selling it, someone else phoned and asked if it was all right to feed it on budgie seed. I was so disgusted that I started making inquiries. The more I dug into it, the more I discovered that there is no restriction — anybody can keep one."



Barn owls have become cheap toys

because the last thing they want is for barn owls to be released. But I know release has got to be done properly." Colin Shawyer, the director of conservation and research at the Hawk and Owl Trust, which is dedicated to conserving the wild barn owl population by improving its habitat, is sceptical. "The creation of more and more habitat for barn owls is the most important prerequisite for increasing Britain's wild population," says Mr Shawyer. "Since 1988, when I first set out the conservation strategy for the barn owl, the Hawk and Owl Trust has been working hard to establish rough grasslands, with the result that the bird has now successfully recolonised many areas. "Wild owls today are probably close to the maximum that the habitat is able to support. Until sufficient new habitat is created, released barn owls will never find enough food to breed, and will die out as fast as they are released." The DoE issues comprehensive guidelines about the reintroduction of barn owls. If captive-bred, they may be released into the wild only under licence, and the DoE issues remarkably few of these. It cautions would-be releasers: "Nightly feeding and record-keeping alone could take a minimum of 20 minutes a day for nine months or more." However, regulation is under way. The DoE's new certification scheme, which came into effect on January 1, requires every captive-bred barn owl to have a certificate. It will stay with the bird for life, being transferred at the time of sale in the same way as a car registration document. The Hawk and Owl Trust hopes that this will reduce the numbers bred in captivity. Meanwhile, it urges owners not to allow their birds to breed, suggesting that they keep the sexes apart or remove eggs.

"I don't mind people keeping barn owls in captivity, especially if they're in aviaries," says Mr Shawyer, "provided they don't think that having them bred will be to the good of the wild population. What I do dislike is the advertising in pet shops so that the general public think it is normal to cage them. And I hate to see them kept as pets in the house or even in a small aviary. "If people who want to get involved with barn owls are unable to help us on the ground, we encourage them to take part in our Adopt a Nestbox scheme, where we provide them with reports on wild barn owls using particular nestboxes out in the country. That has to be better than keeping an owl in a sitting room 20 floors up in a central London tower block and feeding it minced meat."

**OWL FILE**

For information about the new barn owl certification scheme, contact the Department of Environment in Bristol on 0117-987 8202.

To adopt a nestbox, write to the Hawk and Owl Trust, c/o Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW2 4RY, enclosing a SAE (22cm by 11cm).

A Barn Owl Workshop for children and adults, conducted by David Ramsden of the Barn Owl Trust, Devon, takes place at Salcombe School, Onslow Road, Salcombe, Devon, on February 18. For details contact Trudy Turrell on 01803 361140.

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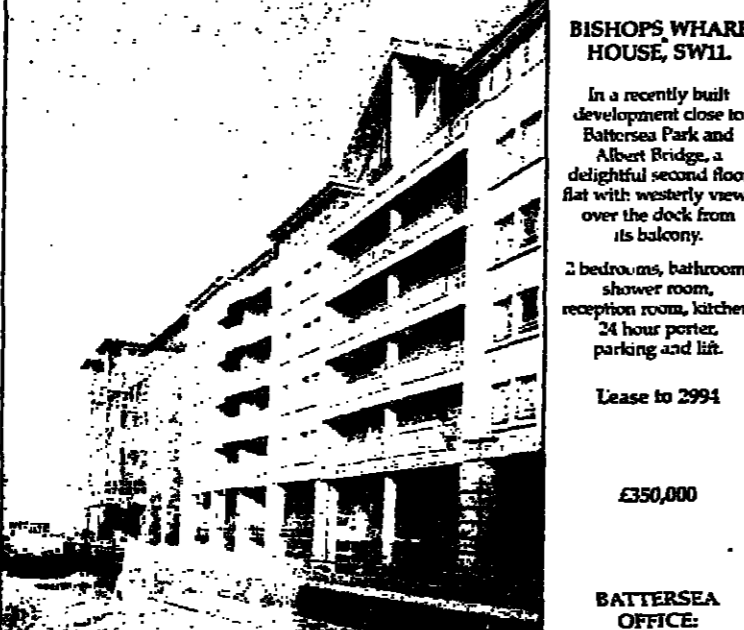
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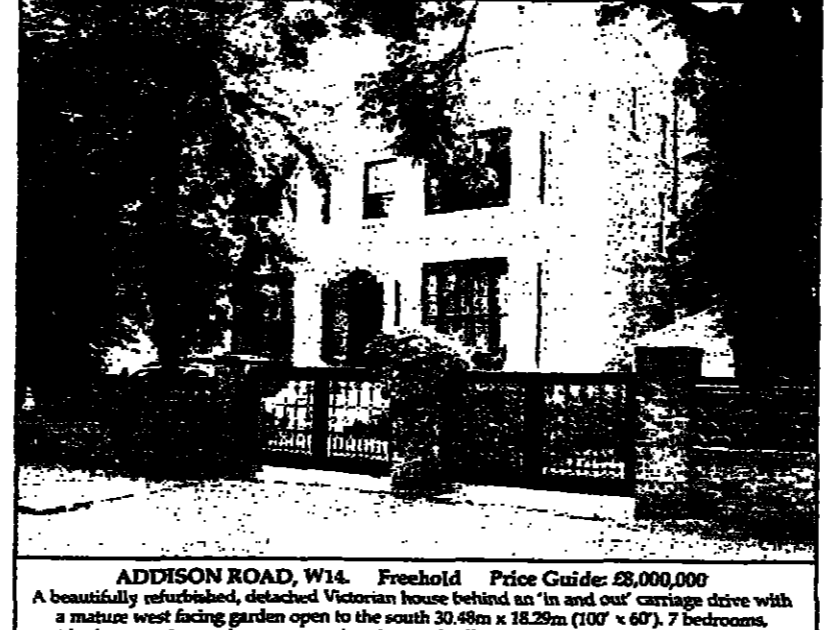
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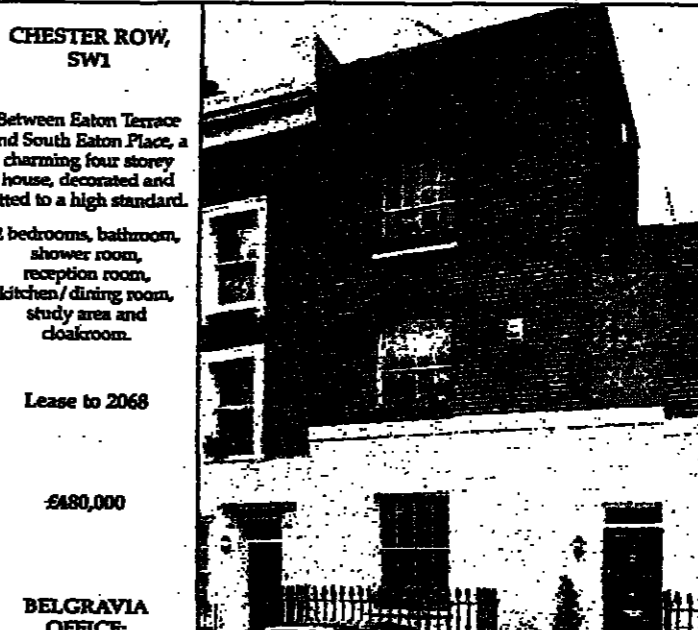
**HAMPSHIRE - Shipton Bellinger** Price Guide: £625,000  
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كازان الاول





The Grade II\* listed private chapel has been converted into a games and music room

# Phoenix rises for a new era of parties

**I**t is cash-strapped couples on a budget who you expect to find chasing fire-damaged repossessions at auction, not the titled younger brother of a marquis — especially one who is a cousin to the Queen and has just sold the family ancestral residence for about £3 million.

Bridwell Park near Uffculme, Devon, eight miles from Tiverton, is, however, a rather aristocratic-looking re-possession, and Lord Ivar Mounbatten, the younger brother of the Marquess of Milford Haven, is a man with an eye for a bargain.

Lord Ivar and his wife Lady Penny spent five years making Moyns Park, the family residence on the Cambridgeshire/Essex border, into a successful corporate hospitality and party venue.

Moyns Park house was left to Lord Ivar and his elder brother by a relative, Ivar Bryce, in 1985. Lord Ivar bought his brother out but, with the cost of maintenance soaring, ended up selling it.

He has now replaced Moyns with Bridwell Park, a house that has been through the hands of many estate agents, and rejected by prospective buyers more times than a mouldy turkey on a supermarket shelf. Bridwell Park had been kicking around on the country house market since the early 1990s.

Superficially, it looked very attractive. It has gleaming, stuccoed walls and a neat little classical pediment above a pair of Venetian windows that lends a raffish yet respectable air to the place. It is also Grade II listed. But buyers were put off by the interior, a clumsy reproduction built after a fire in 1991 had destroyed the original.

The entire complex had also been suburbanised in a way that did it no favours, more St George's Hill than Blandings Castle. There's a helicopter hangar, and the garages in the converted coach house have central heating to keep the fleet of limos warm. The swimming pool, 30ft by 21ft, is housed in a nearby building, with over-flowery decor.

In Devon, all this looks OTT — as does the state-of-the-art security system, the most conspicuous parts of which are four enormous cameras, one on each corner of the house. They can be steered individ-

**HOUSE OF THE WEEK**  
A mansion jinxed by fire and money troubles is back in action as the new family seat of Lord Ivar Mounbatten. Tom Rowland reports on its revival

ually from a command centre housed in one of the six office suites built into the basement, each wired with telecommunications, satellite and computer links.

The house was put up for auction by a property developer who bought it but never actually moved in. It is, however, the personal creation of another developer, Andrew Davis.

In his late thirties, Mr Davis is a builder and creator of country houses who made his first fortune at the age of 19, and who has acquired and lost several more in the interim.

Bridwell Park was responsible for his bankruptcy. In the 1980s he took out a mortgage on the house of about £5 million with The Mortgage Corporation. When the company repossessed Bridwell in the early 1990s it discovered that the house was valued at about 10 per cent of this figure, because there was no proper access and the surrounding land was in separate ownership. By then, the house had suffered the unfortunate fire, but Mr Davis was able to claim against the insurance policy and he spent about £3 million on restoration under the guidance of English Heritage.

Three years later Mr Davis had shrugged off bankruptcy and was back showing the press and prospective buyers around the house, this time as an employee of the architect he had originally employed to carry out the renovation.

But despite repeated price cuts the house stuck on the market, before being sold to a dealer, who proved no more successful in finding a loving owner than Mr Davis.

At the end of last October, it was decided to put the property, by this stage reunited with 181 surrounding acres, up for auction, an unusual step for a big country house. The guide price was down to £1.1 million but it still failed to sell at the auction, going to the Moun-

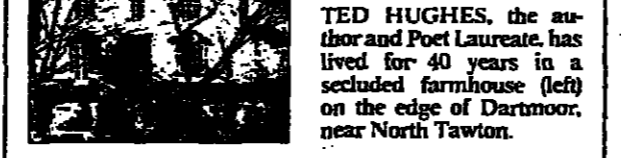
## DREAM HOMES IN DEVON



CHARLIE WATTS, of the Rolling Stones, has a six-bedroom, 17th-century, Grade II listed mansion in 20 acres (above), bought for £100,000 in 1982 at Dalton.



NIGEL MANSELL, the motor racing driver, has a six-bedroom, castle-style mansion (above) in the grounds of Woodbury Park golf club, near Exeter.



TED HUGHES, the author and Poet Laureate, has lived for 40 years in a secluded farmhouse (left) on the edge of Dartmoor, near North Tawton.

battens in a private deal later for an undisclosed sum. They had hardly bought a classic estate. At 181 acres, there was not enough land to farm economically, nor enough for a good shoot. But there is a lake and a fair bit of cover in the dozen or so fields, and Lord Ivar has had lots of practice at making a smart-looking country house on little land a practical proposition. Moyns Park, too, had little land, but Lord Ivar nevertheless managed to build up a devoted clientele for shooting parties, attracted by the relaxed but polished country house entertainment that he and his wife organised. He was also able to negotiate extra shooting land.

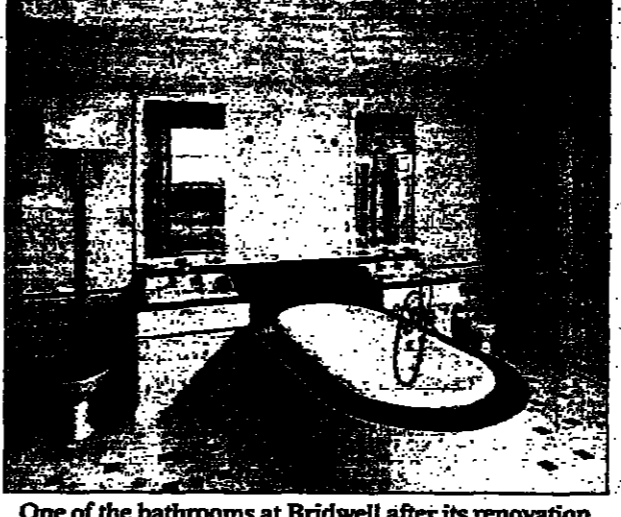
**B**ridwell does have features which, with a little inspiration, could be made spectacular. The 1991 renovation might lack charm but the ornamental plasterwork, which was the glory of the original, has been painstakingly repaired. The vestibule leads to a spectacular elliptical hall which, in turn, leads to the gold drawing room, with a first-rate plasterwork ceiling. There are three more big reception rooms plus a conservatory which, on its own, is big enough to accommodate a small dance. The kitchen is new, with a range of hand-painted units, slate worktops and a four-oven Aga. The house has nine bedrooms and a staff flat. It is just the right size for the Mounbattens to transfer their country house weekend business from Moyns Park if they wish, pocketing about £2 million on the move. With a four-bedroom lodge at the end of the drive they can even move out if that the shortage is leading buyers to lower their expectations of perfection: "There is a fear that if they don't buy now, they might see an increase in prices in spring." East Devon's prices are understandably alluring to those accustomed to prices in the South East. The asking price for a well-located substantial manor house, with seven or eight bedrooms and maybe 20 acres, is about £700,000-£800,000; about £350,000 for a five-bedroom farmhouse with four or five acres, and maybe £100,000 more for one of the sought-after village rectories. Village cottages fetch £100,000 to £250,000. Popular villages south of Tiverton towards Exeter include Bickleigh and Thorverton; nearby Dulverton and Bampton are favourites towards Exmoor.



Bridwell Park, Devon, was bought with a £5 million mortgage, suffered a serious fire, and was sold to Lord Ivar Mounbatten for about £1 million



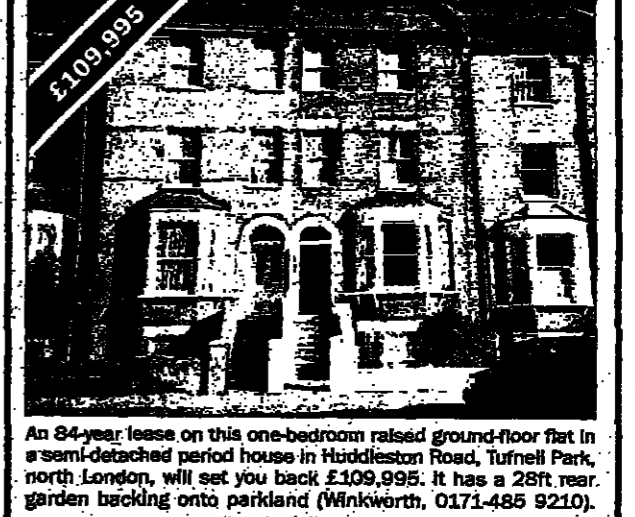
Lord and Lady Ivar Mounbatten with their daughter, Ella



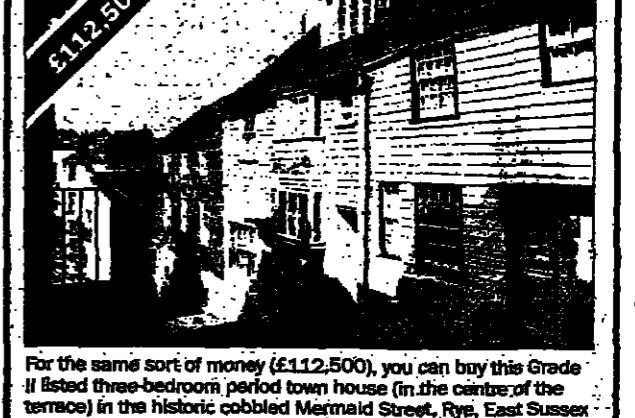
One of the bathrooms at Bridwell after its renovation.

## HOME SWAP

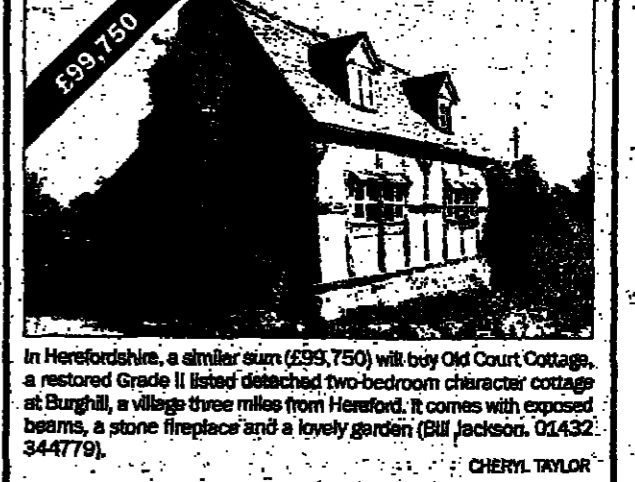
TURNELL PARK, on the eastern fringe of Islington, bounded by Condez Road and Holloway Road, has shot up in value over the past five years. Popular roads, such as Huddleston Road, Hugo Road and Chitt Road, with their three and four-storey Victorian terraces, command prices up to £350,000 for a three to five-bedroom house. A two-bedroom garden flat costs from £120,000 to £170,000, following a 20 per cent increase in prices this year, according to agent Wislaworth. Some of the best property buys in the area can be found around the Huddleston-Orange-Islington area. Prices have risen of up to 15 per cent this year. A long train journey from London — two hours from Ryde to Waterloo, via Ashford or Hastings — rules out most London commuters. London escapees priced out of the Cotswolds are moving to Herefordshire, where prices drop 20 per cent. A new dual carriageway from Swindon to Gloucester, opening shortly, will cut the journey time from London from three and a half hours to under three. Popular areas include the Wye valley, from Hay-on-Wye to Ross-on-Wye. A five-bedroom country house with a couple of acres costs from £150,000, a detached cottage from £80,000.



An 84-year lease on this one-bedroom raised ground-floor flat in a semi-detached period house in Huddleston Road, Turnell Park, north London, will set you back £109,995. It has a 28ft rear garden backing onto parkland (Winkworth, 0171-485 9210).



For the same sort of money (£112,500), you can buy this Grade II listed three-bedroom period town house in the historic cobbled terrace in the historic cobbled terrace (Phillips & Stubbs, 01797 227338).



In Herefordshire, a similar aim (£59,750) will buy Old Court Cottage, a restored Grade II listed detached two-bedroom character cottage at Burghill, a village three miles from Hereford. It comes with exposed beams, a stone fireplace and a lovely garden (Bill Jackson, 01432 344779).

**Property Quiz Winners**  
The answers to The Times Property Quiz on December 27 are as follows: a) The Old House: £440,000 b) Luton Ho: £25 million c) Teymouth Castle: £5 million  
Congratulations to our winners: K.R. Wood of Woking, Surrey; Joanna Deakin of London N7; Richard Moody of Atherstone, Warwick.

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**MARKET COMMENT**  
DEVON's property market is unusual. On the one hand, only a million people inhabit the second largest county in England, so there is not an extensive stock of houses available, certainly, top-quality country houses command additional scarcity value. On the other hand, you will get considerably more for your money there than in counties further east. Martin Lamb, of estate agent Knight Frank's Exeter office, estimates that Somerset, Devon and Cornwall are about 30 per cent cheaper than Gloucestershire or Hampshire. "Bridwell Park [see above] would have made perhaps £2 million if it had been in Gloucestershire," he says, "but you're 100 miles further from London and the South East."

Differentials within the region are opened up by accessibility. The M5/Paddington-Penzance rail corridor through Devon is the key, and properties within, say, 20 minutes' drive of the railway stations are likely to be 10 to 15 per cent more expensive than their equivalents in the more remote northwest Devon. Links with London, if you are well-placed, are good: Exeter is only two hours away by the fastest trains, or about three hours by car, depending on the vagaries of traffic. At the upper end of the county market, these connections are important: "We sell nearly all our houses to people coming into the area from the Home Counties or abroad, and they've pushed prices up," Mr Lamb says. MANY are families attracted by the glories of the Devon countryside, plentiful private day schools and the practicalities of weekly commuting or home-based work. As a result, the strongest demand has been for larger and pricier places: well-kept houses unspoilt by traffic noise are "selling extremely well," says Brian Bishop at Jackson-Stops & Staff in Taunton, Somerset. There are houses on the market, but they are hanging around because they are "blemished", he says. However, he adds

that the shortage is leading buyers to lower their expectations of perfection: "There is a fear that if they don't buy now, they might see an increase in prices in spring." East Devon's prices are understandably alluring to those accustomed to prices in the South East. The asking price for a well-located substantial manor house, with seven or eight bedrooms and maybe 20 acres, is about £700,000-£800,000; about £350,000 for a five-bedroom farmhouse with four or five acres, and maybe £100,000 more for one of the sought-after village rectories. Village cottages fetch £100,000 to £250,000. Popular villages south of Tiverton towards Exeter include Bickleigh and Thorverton; nearby Dulverton and Bampton are favourites towards Exmoor.

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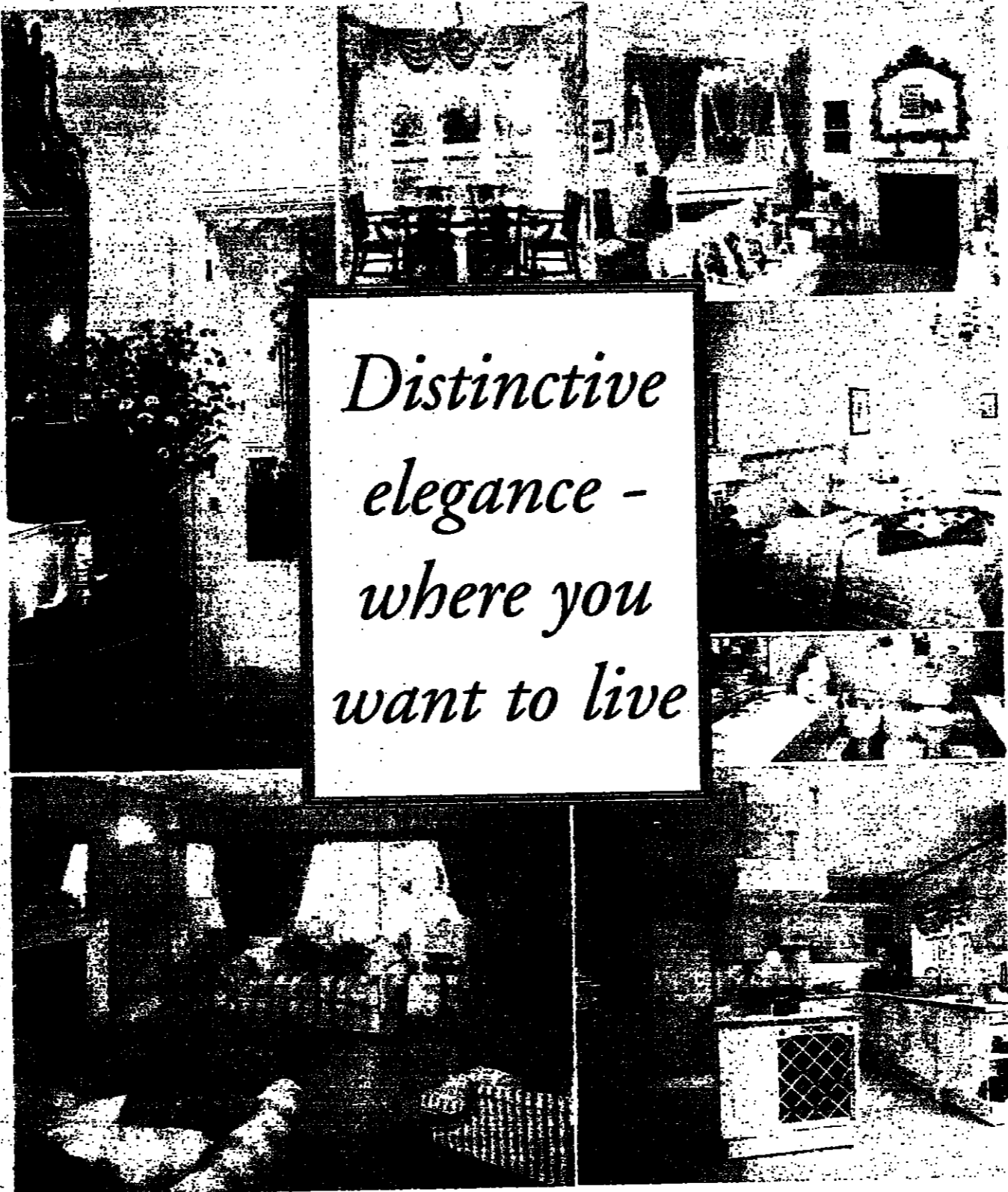
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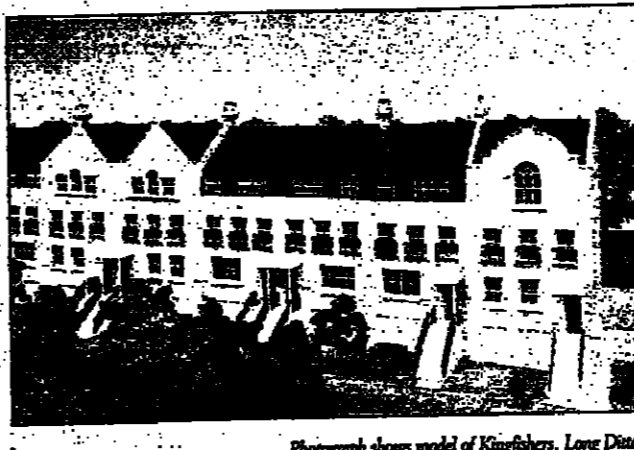


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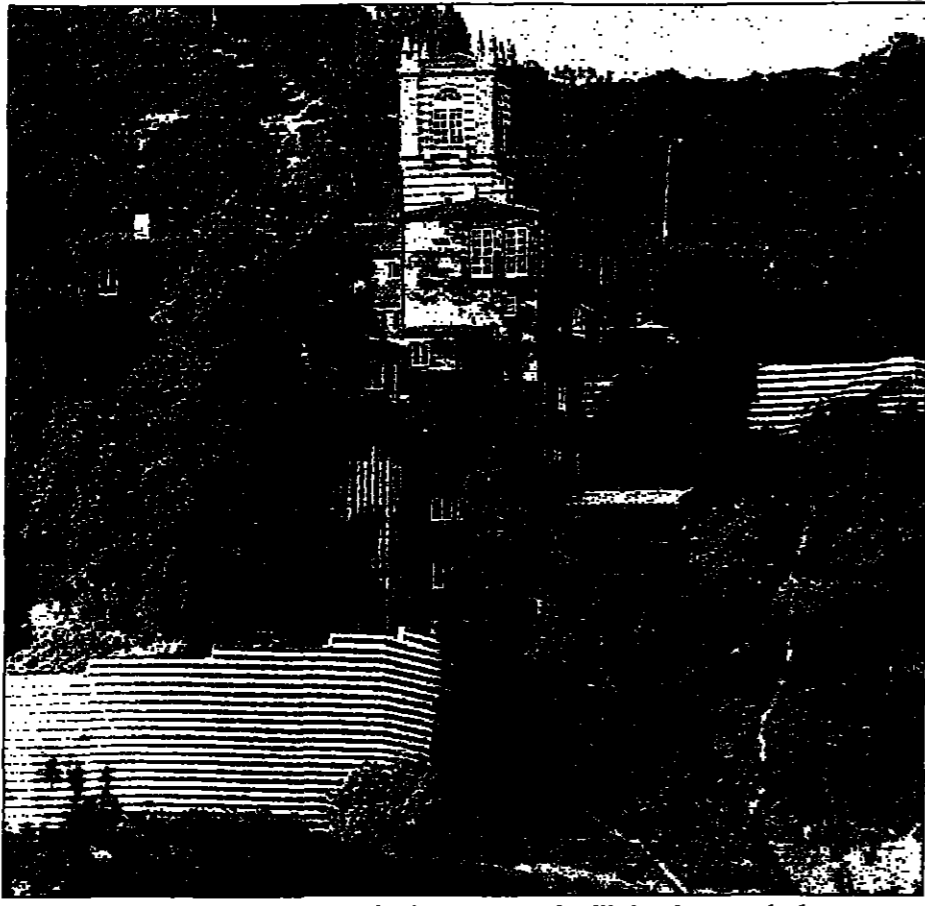


Photograph shows model of Kingfishers, Long Ditton.

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The modern multi-millionaire needs at least five homes scattered around the globe. Rachel Kelly reports



Madonna's secluded mansion in the Hollywood Hills has its own clock tower

# It's Tuesday: it must be Europe



Home-searching in London. Madonna (left), fell for this property in Little Venice.



Karl Lagerfeld at one of his opulent homes in Paris, a converted hôtel built in 1705. Its extravagant salon was decorated by architect Claude Ledoux

**G**offrey Robinson, the Paymaster-General, has five; Karl Lagerfeld has four. Just how many homes do the fabulously rich need these days? The estate agent Knight Frank has produced some fresh research on the subject. Richard Crosthwaite, the firm's London guru and seller of some of the capital's smartest properties, says the going rate is five. "That's one hot — say a villa

in the Caribbean; one cold — a chalet in Gstaad; one home (with a capital 'H') where the children are at school and where he runs his business — probably in London or the Middle East or New York; one in the country; and one sporting estate — probably in Scotland." Serial homebuyers are more common these days, Mr Crosthwaite says. Where once they were the jet-set, now they are the Gulfstream V set. The newly launched plane travels at 577mph, and can fly from

New York to Tokyo without refuelling. The truly super rich, as opposed to the lottery rich or the footballer rich, hate to fly commercial. This new flying machine has cut the journeys between homes, so enabling the eight-digit rich to commute between homes. So the Sultan of Brunei, for example, can hop easily between some of his estimated 40 homes. Even the New York golden couple Brooke Shields and Andre Agassi, who own just two houses (in Las Vegas and New Jersey) and two flats

in New York, are expanding their marital property portfolio by spending about \$6 million (about £3.5 million) on a romantic mansion in the Californian haven of Pacific Palisades. The classic pattern is for such homebuyers to collect houses by a particular architect. Mr Robinson is typical: he is a Lutyens man. Orchards, his main home in Surrey, is a Sir Edwin Lutyens masterpiece in the stockbroker belt near Godalming, Surrey, worth more than £1 million. Meanwhile, he is supervising the restoration of Marsh Court, his house in Stockbridge, Hampshire. This is another Lutyens mansion, a Grade I listed building with 20 bedrooms that Mr Robinson bought for only £800,000, though it was for sale at £3 million.

In London, his home is an eight-floor flat with a huge balcony. It is within the grounds of the Grosvenor Hotel, overlooks Hyde Park and its floors are covered with Persian carpets. In Portugal, a mile from a secluded beach on the Algarve, she has a house in the resort of Quinta do Lago, with two new buildings, one for her gym and the other for her guests. She also has a New York penthouse. Lagerfeld has two homes in France, two in Germany, one in Italy, and three in Monte Carlo. His villa in Monte Carlo was a gift from Prince Rainier and his apartment in Berlin was in exchange for advice on a building a friend had just bought. His house in Rome was also a gift — built as an artist's workshop in 1780. Lagerfeld hasn't stayed there for three years because the heat is too

much for him, and the next door will not allow him to install air-conditioning. The gilded salon of Lagerfeld's Paris home was decorated by Claude Ledoux, Madame du Barry's favourite architect. His house in Hamburg was built between 1905 and 1920, with a beautiful view of the river, but he usually spends only a week or two there each year. That is the problem. The homes of the multiple home-owner are in danger of being like hotels. Their owners usually keep staff in each house, as well as identical wardrobes (they never have luggage) for the few weeks a year they are in residence. The houses are immaculate, but can be impersonal. And there are horrendous problems with staff these days, Mr Crosthwaite says.

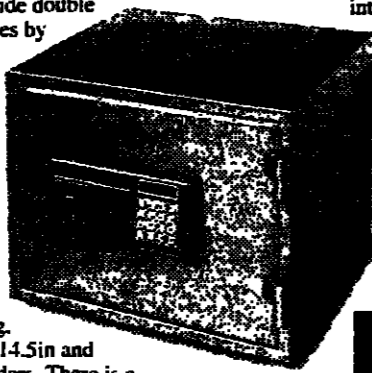
"If the staff don't zip you off, you arrive to find them swarming in your pool, is the typical comment by owners. And then there's the tale-telling. It is very difficult to find discretion these days." As a last word or two of advice for those about to win the lottery jackpot of £15 million or so, Mr Crosthwaite suggests avoiding "all the 'minuses' that go with owning property." In London, this means buying freehold, rather than leasehold. In the country it means minimising public access. "The last thing you want when you've got £10 million in the bank is to have people traipsing over your land," he says. "Only the taxman should be bothering you." And for the overseas retreat? "Quick transfer times. You should be opening the Krug or the pool within an hour-and-a-half of touching down at the airstrip in your Gulfstream." Additional research by Leonard Laiff.

The Sultan of Brunei, said to be the richest man in the world, and Queen Hajah Mariam, pictured with him below, are more than spoilt for choice: they can use the state-owned palace, above left, or their London home, right.

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**F**or the summer break, rather than the weekend getaway, Mr Robinson can choose between Italy or France. His £3 million villa in Tuscany has been used by the Blair family for the past two summers, but the Robinson family can also retreat to his luxury £1 million flat in Cannes, on Avenue des Hesperides overlooking the Mediterranean, which has also been enjoyed by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown. "These tycoons are often genuinely interested in an architect," Mr Crosthwaite says. "It may be Frank Lloyd Wright or the Nineties equivalent. So they collect houses by a name and follow the architect, or they make their own mark on the landscape by commissioning a new house." Bill Gates, for example. They also tend to be competitive. "If your business competitor has a big London house, then you want an even bigger one," Mr Crosthwaite says. There can also be tax advantages to living in several countries, he adds. On the whole, multiple homeowners tend not to be British. The Duke of Westminster could obviously afford more homes, though his commitments tie him to Cheshire. But wealthy Arab and American families are certainly more international in their choice of dwellings. Madonna owns a Los Angeles mansion, just below the

Hollywood sign, for when she wants to be alone. Behind its 30ft-high walls and mass of trees is the star's own clock tower. She owns a further property in Miami — a six-bedroom oceanfront Dade County home set on a strip of Biscayne Bay, Florida, once known as Millionaires' Row. In Portugal, a mile from a secluded beach on the Algarve, she has a house in the resort of Quinta do Lago, with two new buildings, one for her gym and the other for her guests. She also has a New York penthouse. Lagerfeld has two homes in France, two in Germany, one in Italy, and three in Monte Carlo. His villa in Monte Carlo was a gift from Prince Rainier and his apartment in Berlin was in exchange for advice on a building a friend had just bought. His house in Rome was also a gift — built as an artist's workshop in 1780. Lagerfeld hasn't stayed there for three years because the heat is too



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The Paymaster-General, Geoffrey Robinson, a five-home man, is restoring this Lutyens mansion in Hampshire

مكتبة الأهل

# And it's all for the love of Iris

**Stephen Anderton sings the praises of a flower which looks a good deal better than it smells**

I have been having a warm relationship with Stinking Iris for many years. Iris (her close friends call her *foetidissima*) is a lover of low, dark places, and I use her there without shame. What would be the pleasure of a shady bower without my iris?

*Iris foetidissima* is as English as they come, and genuinely native, like Bog Myrtle. But while one may meet with Bog Myrtle only on dismal moors, *foetidissima* is a creature of society, despite her name.

You will find her in hedgerows and in churchyards, and she is inseparable from the company of flower arrangers and, who knows, vicars. Why? Because she has it all. She is evergreen, glossy and lifts your heart with her orange-red berries on the coldest of winter days. She may stink, but she has a heart of gold.

Let us consider this smell. I do not dislike it, although you may say I am biased. It has been described as "beefy", and some call her "Roast Beef Iris". But she presses it on no one. A squeeze of her glossy leaves, and suddenly you are 15 again, in long school corridors redolent of cabbage and dark gravy. It is a most comfortable smell.

Her flowers are of no great account. They are lilac-mauve and brown and as brief as the June weekend. They look up from somewhere around your knees. There is not a striking beauty.

She has, however, a sister, *citrina*, whom most find more comely: her flowers are no larger and last no longer, but they are of a delicate and appealing pale lemon and brown. Her ripe berries in autumn are just as striking as her sister's.

Few people know this, but these girls have a third sister who rarely appears in society. Her berries are white as driven snow. But, alas, although she breeds, she rarely breeds true. The orange-red family blood is too powerful in her



The iris is a sociable family found in hedgerows and in churchyards, and often seen in the company of flower-arrangers and vicars



The orange-red berries of *Iris foetidissima* are a cheery sight

veins. There is, too, a fourth sister, *variegata*, pale and streaky as the day she was born.

She is quite without berries. Friends have tried her in full sun and in the cool of a shady arbour, but still she is pale, streaky and

barren. Love her or leave her for it, for she will not change. Some say, cruelly, that she has the virus. Imagine my surprise, then, when on holiday in northern Spain in late May, I came across a fifth sister, 'Ficos de Europa'. She was simply

lying at the roadside (family tendencies will always die hard) and in the blazing Spanish sun. However, much we may shelter the sisters from the English sun at home, this beauty craved the sun. Her face was of the purest, brightest golden

yellow, and I knew at once that I must have her. Here was a face to be proud of, a face to hold its own in any garden. Brief still, but glorious; and with, so said the locals, perfect autumnal berries.

**Friends have tried her in full sun and in a shady arbour, but she is still pale and barren**

But holiday romances are ever brief. She would not come away. I could not bear to uproot her from her native Spain and, in any case, the law would not allow it. Her berries remain unknown to me.

Back in Britain I made inquiries about how I might get hold of this fairest sister. And at once the pleasure I had enjoyed in finding my precious treasure was dashed. Apparently she has already been to England, arriving first about 20 or 30 years ago. Others are already cultivating her.

Let me be blunt. You may be fond of *Iris foetidissima*. She may play a great part in your garden. But you will love this sister better. Seek her out from those gardeners who have held her captive and in secret for so long. Introduce her to your friends and neighbours.

For now, though it breaks my heart, I must tell you that my former love, the plainer and stinking sister, is this year taken with the pox. The disfiguring leaf spot is upon her and, therefore, I fear upon many of the other irises in my garden.

How shall I ever keep fair 'Ficos de Europa' clean if she enters this foul den? Only by spraying her diseased sister, or if the infection be too deep (may Heaven forgive me) by burning her. It is a decision which weighs heavy on my heart and, so help me, I must choose. *Iris foetidissima* can have purple,

blue or yellow (var. *citrina*) flowers. The berries are red, white ('Ficus-Albo'), or yellow fading to orange. It takes about four years to flower from seed. The form 'Ficos de Europa' exists in private gardens, but is not listed in *The Plant Finder*.

This iris is strong enough to withstand poor, shady soil, but will do much better elsewhere. Iris leaf spot has been a serious problem this year, and this evergreen species will harbour the disease and reinfect others varieties next year. Cut off and burn the affected parts now and spray with mancozeb in spring. Leaf spot in this species begins as blisters but also runs up and down the leaf, yellowing whole areas.

Do not confuse this with virus, which streaks the leaf less dramatically but does not blister, and can distort the entire leaf. Serious viral infection can be a case for burning the whole plant, to save other irises from infection. New seedlings, even from the same plant, will be virus-free.

There are two new books on irises: *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Irises*, by Geoff Stubbings (David and Charles, £16.99) is a practical review of the main species and varieties; *A Guide to Species Irises*, edited by the Species Group of the British Iris Society (Cambridge University Press, £6), is an excellent up-to-date review of the whole genus.

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How a small garden at Kensington Palace inspired a Cotswold landscaping dream. Jane Owen reports



Princess Michael of Kent, riding at Nether Lypiatt Manor, says: "When we came here it was a wasteland, and I wish now I had employed someone in the first place, because I have made so many mistakes"

Lark that left its mark

Glamorous in beige angora and a leopard-spot neck scarf, Princess Michael of Kent wants to know about replacement sheets for her polycarbonate greenhouses. Her passion for gardening is surprisingly detailed for someone so busy. A controversial royal who writes and lectures — the Kents are not on the Civil List, a source of irritation to the Princess — she is reputed to be highly social. This reputation rankles.

"I've always been, in my opinion, a quiet blue-stocking. All my life my ambitions were intellectual. I've never had any other ambitions. I'm not a party person; I have a hearing problem to do with definition, because I had a scuba-diving accident years ago, so I can't bear to be in a room full of people, since I can't hear properly," says the Princess, a survivor of the kind of press coverage that overwhelmed the Duchess of York.

Nether Lypiatt Manor, the Kents' elegant Grade I listed home near Stroud in Gloucestershire, is their weekend and holiday retreat. "The house faces due west and the sun sets directly on the front steps, and so, like some suburban couple, we sometimes sit out there watching the sun set," the Princess says. And, just like some suburban couple, she and Prince Michael share the gardening tasks left by the "one and a half" gardeners they employ: she is good with flowers, especially roses; he excels at the more robust work.

"The Prince has his little tractor, with his little trailer, and he goes off into the woods, with the dogs, and collects all the fallen branches, and then he saws them up. He is a happy sawing man. I gave him a saw for Christmas. I thought, 'how useful to have a clipper that you just zip along'."

"Both my brother-in-law, the Duke of Kent, and my husband have a passion for clearing woods, which I daresay they inherited from Queen Mary," says the Princess, who has a slight mid-European accent despite being brought

up mostly in Australia. She adds: "My husband is happiest behind his tractor and local farmers say, 'Arrr, gaffer'. Yes, that's what they call him."

Princess Michael is also the garden photographer in chief. When, early last year, some prize tulips (bought on a tulip-shopping spree to Holland last year with Lady Cawdor) bloomed for the first time while the Princess was away, it fell to the Prince to photograph their glory.

"We made our way to a converted, outbuilding where she offered coffee, and then said, flustering her hands, that she was not sure how to make it. I rose to the challenge of making instant coffee. The garden thrives despite being 700ft up, having poor, thin soil and being buffeted by winds which would blow away plantings if it were not for tall enclosures of stone walls and hedges. Home-made compost is added to the soil; it is made from garden debris, leaf mould and horse and cow muck — the Princess is a horsewoman.

To the front of the house, the Princess has made simple box parterres, filled with gravel, in keeping with the elegant facade of the house. "I am a great believer in 17th-century formal gardens. I am not a follower of the theory that the garden should be free and should also be a noble savage," she says. Mixed borders to either side of the front garden make a voluptuous contrast to the stark sculptural box. To the south side of the house, a herb garden enclosed in a simple box pattern supplies the kitchen. Close by is one of the Princess's innovations: a low, clipped, rose maze.

There is also a central alley of pear and apple cordons, with soft fruit cages beyond: black, white and red currants, raspberries and strawberries. Behind this is an

amusing dragon hedge, the dragon apparently munching away at a holly bush. This conceals the nursery area, where most of the plants for the garden are brought on. Streptocarpus and other tender plants are grown for the house in the Princess's space-age plastic greenhouses behind the dragon.

"These greenhouses are high capital output but have much lower running costs," says the Princess, adding: "I go to the Chelsea Flower Show and look around for good things like the greenhouses."

ME AND MY GARDEN: PRINCESS MICHAEL OF KENT



"I thought, 'this is frightfully easy, this gardening lark', the Princess says

dormant snake's head fritillaries, hellebores and snowdrops. The Princess decided that a sea of daffodils would complete the picture. A fine lime avenue leads down to a vast sycamore. To one side are the dazzling branches of a contorted shrub. On closer inspection this is a steel "planting" by the sculptor Giuseppe Lunde, who made the ceremonial gates in Hyde Park presented to the Queen Mother.

The garden steps, terrace by terrace, down the hill beside the house. Each terrace is edged with Cotswold stone, and huge hedges partition one terrace from the next. A six-metre high tapestry hedge of holly, yew, beech and box makes the boundary of one garden and clipped yew does the job elsewhere. A fountain garden, once a foot-

ball pitch for the Kents' son, Lord Frederick Windsor, sports old mulberries and medlars. At the lowest level is a tennis court, separated from the swimming pool by an ivy wall pierced by regular arches — "I am a passionate player," she says, "but I don't want to hear shrieks from the tennis court when I am quietly reading by the pool."

The most original area is the Princess's walled studio garden. It has a slightly Japanese feel; thanks to a bonsai growing beside a large grey stone with tablets set in four hollows. The tablets read: "Belief of The graven word/Power of The written word."

But what makes this studio garden especially unusual is the planting: the theme is black and white. "Everyone who is keen on gardening, at some point in their lives, does a white garden," the Princess says. "I got bored with it and decided to have a black and white garden, and I found there are lots of black flowers: cosmos, poppies, sweet peas, carnations, a very dark rose, wisteria, pansies, tulips, grass and iris. The 'Albertine' rose is the only colour allowed; it grows over a maquette of Prince Albert."

Princess Michael's enthusiasm for royal history is well known, an enthusiasm which stems in part from the fact, she says, that her own family has roots throughout the royal houses of Europe going back to Atilia the Hun. At the drop of a hat she will veer off gardening to explain some complex historical point about the Royal Family and the historical problems caused to them by Catholicism (she is a practising Catholic).

Her gardening CV, however, is less well documented. "I am a farmer's daughter," she says. "My family has always been on the land and I still have a sense of wonder

when I put a seed or cutting in the ground and it grows." The farming refers to when her father — Baron Günther von Reibnitz, once alleged to have been a member of the Nazi SS — farmed in Mozambique.

"When we came to Kensington Palace we were allocated a charming little garden that wasn't yet a garden, and I was pregnant and trying to do up an apartment that hadn't been touched, since before the war, I wanted the garden done because I wanted to put the pram out there. So my friend, Arabella Lennox-Boyd, did this garden for me, because I was so busy."

Seeing the plot transformed, the Princess's gardening confidence grew. "I thought, 'this is frightfully easy, this gardening lark'."

"When we came down here it was a wasteland, and I wish now I had employed someone in the first place, because I have made so many mistakes. The basics were laid out by Lord Barrington earlier this century. He was one of the Violet Gordon Woodhouse ménage à cinq who lived here."

Her new project — "My dream" — is to make a water garden from the woodland garden to cascade down to the obelisk. "I love the sound of tumbling water: it is Africa and it is Austria to me."

How does she find time for the extra projects? "I am a Capricorn, so I am very organised. My weekends here are the gardening time, writing time, horse time. I compartmentalise my life. And I delegate. I have learnt to touch-type and I e-mail and fax. — I need the love of my family and my friends."

If friends are international, the Princess appears to identify with Englishness in the garden. "When I first arrived here I was told that English ladies, when they reach a certain age, either tend towards God or the garden. I am definitely of the latter category, because I feel that God is with me in the garden."



STEPHEN ANDERTON'S GARDEN ANSWERS

Q Why will 'Paper White' narcissi not survive in my garden? And if I replant this winter's bulbs indoors next year, will they bloom? — H. Ward, Sulgrave, Oxford.

A *Narcissus papyraceus*, the so-called 'Paper White', is grown for its fabulous perfume. It comes from the Mediterranean and would rather be left there: it likes heat. Most British gardens are too damp and cool to ripen it for flowering again, even though it may survive. It is possible to get the plants to flower again under glass by putting them into a cool greenhouse as soon as they have flowered in the house, so that they get as much light as possible to feed the bulbs. As spring fades, the leaves will die back and the pots can be dried off and allowed to remain warm and dry under glass until re-potting in autumn. While they are in leaf, feed them with tomato food.

Q I have four varieties of geranium and overwinter them in cold frames and on window ledges. In recent years I have lost 10-15 per cent of them to a black rot which kills the stems but leaves the roots unaffected. How can I avoid this disease? Should I treat the soil? — D. Wheatley, Orpington, Kent.

A This sounds like a fungal disease, probably "black leg" which usually attacks the base of the cutting before the roots form. Reducing its incidence is mostly a matter of hygiene. Sterilise your pots, trays and knife. Use clean, new compost for the cuttings and, yes, sterilise the soil in the cold frames. Make sure you use a rooting hormone powder with a fungicide in it. Treat stuck plants with a systemic fungicide a few days before taking cuttings.

RELUCTANT CITRUS

IN RESPONSE to Barbara Abbe's recent article on citrus trees, several readers have asked why their pip-grown trees, ranging from eight to 18 years old, will not flower (and then fruit), and what compost should be used for re-potting.

The answer is that citrus trees are unpredictable from seed and, once they get to the size where regular pruning is needed to keep them manageable, the likelihood of them flowering is further delayed. Feed them gently so long as they are healthy, prune as little as possible, give them all the sunshine possible. Do not overpot plants. But, given a tight root run, they can be fed generously with a nitrogen-rich liquid-feed through high summer when temperatures are high. Composts should be free-draining. Ready's Nursery of Loddon, Norfolk, which holds the National Collection of Citrus, recommends the soil-based John Innes composts, opened up with 15-20 per cent perlite or composted "potting grade" bark. Use John Innes No 2 for pots up to 20cm; No 3 for larger plants.

Write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 6AN. We regret it may not be possible to deal with every request: dates is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.

Clock those killer weeds

You need to get the timing right with glyphosate, says Stephen Anderton

Readers often write to me saying that such and such a plant is immune to weed-killer, and ask how else can they get rid of it. Mostly, the problem is neither ineffective herbicides, water-proof foliage, immunity, nor even a new super-race of horsetail. The problem is timing.

The best general purpose weedkiller for perennial weeds is glyphosate. Various companies make it and it is most commonly sold as Roundup, Tumbleweed and Tough Weed Killer. But even glyphosate needs putting on at the right time — for persistent weeds, several times at the right time. To get that timing right, you need to understand how glyphosate works. To grow, plants make the necessary proteins by the use of amino acids. Wherever plant cells divide, proteins are at work, and the process is helped along by enzymes. Glyphosate acts as a decoy to the enzyme: bonds with it and locks it up until the plant dies for lack of protein to grow.

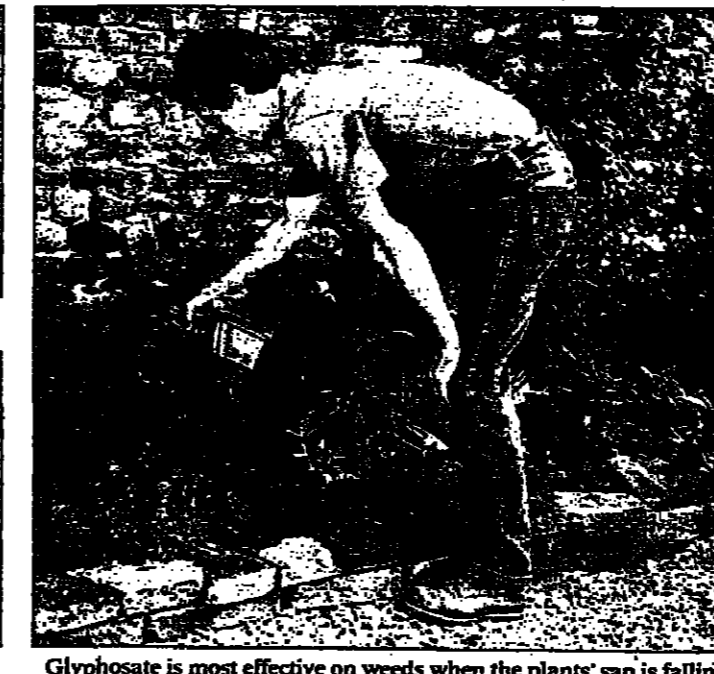


Bindweed in straggling mode



The fiendish ground elder weed

Glyphosate will attack any foliage it lands on, and will even permeate bark under two years old, so avoid spraying around very young trees. Once the glyphosate hits the soil it again forms a bond, this time with particles in the soil. This inactivates it, and stops it leaching away until it is degraded by micro-organisms and fungi in the soil to become minute quantities of water, carbon dioxide, nitrate and phosphate. Even in this inactive state, its half-



Glyphosate is most effective on weeds when the plants' sap is falling.

life in the soil is only a few weeks. By contrast, the weedkiller paraquat is also inactivated by contact with the soil, but has a considerably longer half-life, because its soil-bound molecule is much harder for micro-organisms to break down. "Tough" weeds can also have impenetrable foliage, which will shed water-based sprays before they can be absorbed in sufficient quantity. To begin to solve this problem, weedkillers are often blended with a



The killer Japanese knotweed



Horsetail attacks a rhododendron

detergent to lower the surface tension of the droplets and make the mixture stick. It is ironic that recent formulations of glyphosate (it has been around for 20 years) were classified as "irritant", not because of the glyphosate but because of the soap content. Now things are changing. The new formulation Roundup Blacive uses a soap mild enough for it to be permitted to be sold at garden centres without a hazard classifica-



- For the sake of thirsty wildlife, break open a small area of frozen ponds, or float a football in the water to discourage freezing.
On neutral to acid soils, dress with lime those areas of the vegetable garden intended for brassicas (cabbage family) to suppress clubroot disease.
Keep greenhouse watering cans full, so that water for pot plants is the same temperature as the plants.
Spray fruit trees with tar oil wash to kill overwintering insect eggs.
Beware of walking on the foliage of emerging spring bulbs.
Start-up and briefly run lawn mowers and power equipment occasionally, to keep them in good order.
Plant a mistletoe berry or two in a nick in the bark of an old apple, poplar or robinia.





# Secrets of the kitchen garden

Stephen Anderton visits two walled gardens restored to their former role

For all the cosy glow evoked by the television image of *The Victorian Kitchen Garden*, there are more walled gardens rotting about the countryside than there are walled gardens in good order. And by good order I mean in any kind of serious use, whether ornamental or productive.

Why save a walled garden? Why save a means of food production which uses old-fashioned technology when the science of horticulture has moved on? There are plenty of reasons, historical and sociological, but the best of them are practical.

Such concentrations of hard-working simple cultivation offer endless practical lessons to anyone who loves to garden.

Recently I visited two revitalised walled gardens, at Normanby Hall in north Lincolnshire, and at Cressing Temple in Essex. Both are managed by local authorities, and both are doing very different things.

Normanby Hall was the first garden project to get a National Lottery grant, receiving £210,000 in late 1995. Since then work has leapt ahead, taking this walled garden back to its 1890s heyday. Following research to find out just what had been where, paths were laid and the first of the glasshouses that make up the great walled garden were built - sensibly in modern, white-painted aluminium.

Purists need have no worries about what happens at Normanby. There may be modern materials and modern machines to import the initial 150 tons of manure, but what goes on in the garden now is the real process of kitchen gardening.

The place is filling up with period varieties of vegetables,

fascinating not because they are old, but because of the ways head gardener Neil Porteous grows them.

"We try to use as many of the old techniques as we can," he says. "We experiment to see which are effective, putting rhubarb leaves in the trench under seedling cabbages to deter root fly, or using a 50:50 mixture of urine and water to deter gooseberry sawfly larvae. That really seems to work a treat."

The garden is maintained organically, and produce is sold to visitors, when man-power allows, on a cut-while-you-wait basis. Under glass there are such labour-saving devices as automatic vents and biological pest control which allow the garden to be maintained by three and a half gardeners, one Mencap-sponsored trainee, and volunteers (gone are the days of 11 gardeners).

In turn, this allows Mr Porteous time to make his growing techniques as instructive as possible.

There are vines grown by spur, long-rod, and extension pruning systems. Peaches are trained at 18in below the glass for optimum ripening. Tomatoes are sown late in May, planted outdoors under a north wall, then lifted and replanted under south-facing glass at 12.5C to produce a crop of fruit in November. There is also a forcing shed for rhubarb, sea-kale and chicory.

The garden stays open all year round, and I can well imagine that there will always be plenty to see, even if the flower borders which flank the central paths have gone to sleep.

Heated cables in frames replace layers of manure to produce early carrots, Chinese artichokes and salads. Proper separate compost bins are



Jim Dowdy, one of the gardeners at Normanby Hall in Lincolnshire, experiments with old cultivation methods for the period varieties of vegetables established in the garden

being set up to produce leaf mould and compost, and there will be a turf stack producing loam for mixing composts.

Finding the right plants was not too hard in the vegetable line, but fruit is proving difficult. Mr Porteous is looking far and wide for pre-1901 raspberries, and the strawberry 'Paxton's Glory' he discovered through a botanic garden in Berlin.

The much smaller late 16th-century walled garden at Cressing Temple in Essex was revitalised in pre-1990s days, opening for the first time in the summer of 1995. It adjoins no great mansion, but a farmhouse and two enormous 700-year-old Essex barns, built by the Knights Templar.

Bringing this garden to life was a much harder trick to

pull off. There is no ready-made public affection for late-Medieval and Tudor gardens because relatively little is known about them. Essex County Council rightly decided to take a freer approach to the layout of this garden, since archaeology gave no detailed indication of how the garden was used.

The garden is now an imaginative amalgam of design features from gardens of the period, arranged to show off the various period plants through their uses in the kitchen, the medicine cupboard or in the household generally.

Wide brick paths connect a moat, fount, pool, potager, nosegay garden, orchard,

and any number of flowery meads.

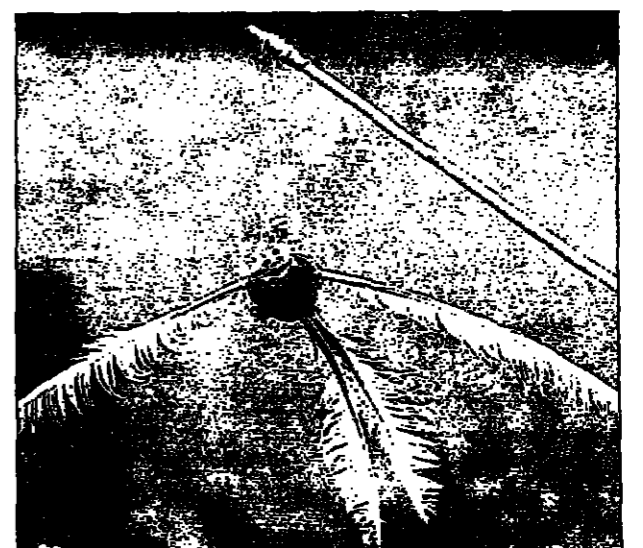
What is curious is that this garden, despite having opted for a more ornamental approach to its renovation, has to work harder to be attractive than Normanby. Without interpretation it would be just a quaint selection of plants. Correct for the period no doubt, but it has to stand or fall very much on its design as seen in the 1990s.

The council works hard at interpreting the garden, and there are many school visits guided by the curator Andrew Mugford, who really knows his stuff about these plants - from herbs to fending off human foot-rot to the making of soft antiseptic lavatory paper from the leaves of *Verbascum thapsus*.

Normanby has a subtle advantage over Cressing. Everyone knows and has enjoyed the end result of growing fruit and vegetables, so seeing them in production completes the picture. It is a tempting means to an end, which we can repeat for ourselves in our own gardens.

But which of us will go home and strew the carpet with half a pound of lavender? Who would be tempted? Whereas most of us would lick our lips at a rosy apple or a perfect row of leeks.

Normanby Hall Country Park (01724 720588) is four miles north of Scunthorpe, off the B1430; open daily, 11am-4pm in winter. Cressing Temple (01376 58403) is three miles southeast of Braintree, Essex; opens at Easter until the autumn.



A potato and feathers make a traditional scarecrow

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# The truth is out there



### Ruth Gledhill meets an X-Files fan dedicated to illuminating students

The student union at Bristol University organised a safe sex campaign last year after an outbreak of a sexually transmitted disease. This provoked protests that the union was attempting to impose a moral code. The three people involved in the campaign were Christians.

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prayers. "Father, our lives are always changing. Help us to face each challenge positively," said postgraduate Emma Langley, 27.

Dr Stuart, formerly a curate at St Mary's, Twickenham, wants to help students understand that it is possible to be both a student and an individual who lives by spiritual principles.

There is among students a perception that the life they want to lead is not compatible with having a faith," he said. "That is a misconception I want to break down."

Later, over lunch, a funny and articulate teenager was challenged on his ambition in life. "To be a Roman Catholic priest," he replied. The room went silent.

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The Rev Sue Watterson leads a prayer at Bristol

## Is family worship leading to a decline in children's religious education?

The traditional Sunday school is in crisis, church leaders say. Increasingly, on Sunday mornings, churches are putting on informal "family services", where children run riot.

Church leaders are concerned that a growth in family worship means that fewer churches than ever are offering traditional Sunday schools for children to receive specialised religious instruction. Sunday school attendance has been declining at about 5 per cent a year since the beginning of the century, but it is only now that churches are speaking in terms of a crisis.

The trend is being fuelled in the Church of England, following its decision last year to allow children to receive Confirmation before Communion. Many dioceses allow seven-year-olds to take Communion and in Oxford even younger children can receive it.

The Right Rev Stephen Venner, Bishop of Middleton in the Manchester diocese, who chaired the working party that drew up the Church of England report *All God's Children?*, says the encouragement of family worship can create problems.

"Children are not used to sitting still for an hour and a quarter," he says. "But on the other hand, we want churches to be places where people feel comfortable. The days when men wore their best suits and women wore hats to church have gone."

Bishop Venner's report examined the decline in traditional Sunday schools. While a survey in 1955 found that 83 per cent of adults had attended Sunday school or Bible classes in their childhood, just 14 per cent of children were now involved in a church-related activity on a Sunday.

Few of these children will be at a traditional Sunday school, and even fewer will grow up to become regular churchgoers. "Churches are really struggling with what to do with children," he says. "And because the time that families spend together is now so short, parents are not keen for their children to be farmed off somewhere else on Sunday morning."



A survey in 1955 showed that 83 per cent of adults had attended Sunday school in their childhood. Today the figure is 14 per cent

# Sunday schools crisis

1780 by the philanthropist Robert Raikes. He fought off opposition from Conservatives, who believed that teaching the poor to read and write spelled revolution, and from Sabbatarians attempting even then to keep Sunday special.

Beginning in Gloucester with four women who taught children to read, write and say the catechism, the movement took off in Europe and America. But as secular education improved, Sunday schools in the 19th century began to specialise in religious education. There was even a training college for Sunday school teachers, founded at Selly Oak

Birmingham, by the Sunday School Union in 1907. Elizabeth Bruce, training adviser for the National Christian Education Council, formerly the Sunday School Union, says: "Sunday schools have been in decline since the beginning of the century, but churches seem only now to be waking up to the fact that there is a crisis."

Judy Jarvis, a Methodist lay worker who chairs the consultative group of ministry among children, says that churches tend to keep people of all ages in worship together. "A number of them have a small corner where there are activities laid out for

children, so they don't have to sit on a hard pew throughout."

One church in London is having none of this, however. At St Mary's Roman Catholic church in Cadogan Street, central London, investment banker Luca Terribile, 30, has just helped start a Sunday school. He arrived here from Italy four years ago to find Mass regularly disrupted by young children "happily screaming, laughing and crying, running around the church."

He says: "At the beginning of each service at 10 o'clock every Sunday

morning the priest calls all the children to the altar, then we take them to the sacristy, play games and recite simple prayers with them, keep them amused and bring them back after Mass. He started with eight children, and numbers have grown to 30. "The good news is spreading and the attendance of families is increasing every Sunday. The church is packed," he adds.

Canon Vincent Berry, the parish priest, is delighted: "The parents are very grateful all the children have benefited enormously."

RUTH GLEDHILL

## Message of hope that all Christians must pass on

Recently I was asked by my old school to speak at the annual dinner of former pupils. It was an honour and a challenge to be invited to toast "The Society of Jesus and the College" (the school, St Aloysius, in Glasgow, is a Jesuit Foundation).

The course of my life has been such that I had not seen my contemporaries since leaving school 25 years ago. Reflecting on what I might say, I was struck by how changed are the circumstances of education.

never found them. I believe that they were buried with him; and so they lie, now decayed, in a grave in sight of the Ochil Hills.

As you might expect, my grandfather was no ecumenist. Indeed, I remember him telling me that the reason "Yankee laddies" the Pope wore skirts was to cover up his cloven hooves. I think I must have felt some thrill at this because by then my mother had ensured that I was already within the grips of "they Papists". I should add that, although my father converted, his father never knew this and died believing his son was still of the Kirk. The hurt of

telling him would have been too great.

Thinking about this, I am torn between a wish that such religious divisions might be diminished and a regret that the main force of their decline has been indifference. A Church exists to lead its members

all affirm the existence of God, the Divinity of Christ, and the reality of Jesus's resurrection from the dead. The secular world believes in none of these, and increasingly has forgotten what they mean. Thus, Christians have an educational mission to the world and an instructional duty to their younger members.

A serious education, especially a religious one, should also be a distance preparation for death. I say this not in morbidity, but in recognising that the character of life is conditioned by its end: just as a journey is no open-ended but a course directed towards a destination. Christianity teaches that, on life's journey, we are never alone. Like the sun that is ever-present even when clouds are overhead, the love of God radiates down upon the world. To have learnt that universal lesson is to have hope in God's beneficence whatever might befall one.

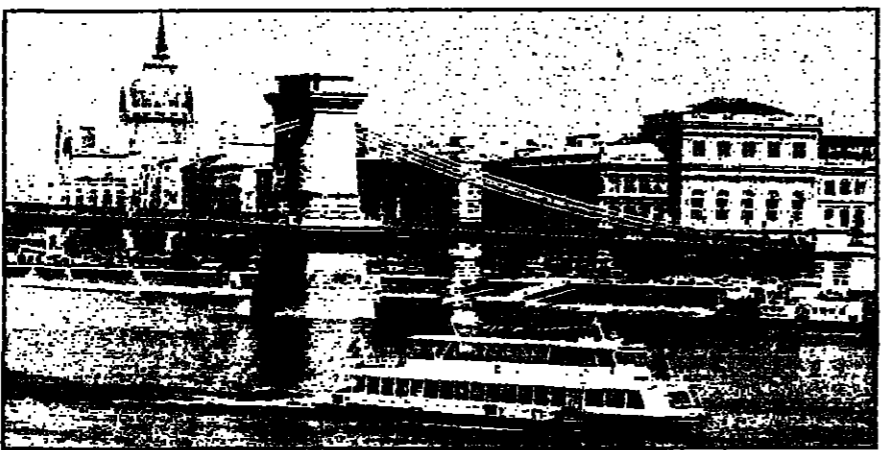
● John Haldane is Professor of Philosophy at the University of St Andrews.

## Credo

JOHN HALDANE

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CHANGING TIMES

## Church services for tomorrow

- First Sunday of Epiphany.**
- ARMAGH CATHEDRAL:** 10 HC; 11 M. Marching in G. 1.15 Ch E & Lian.
- BELFAST CATHEDRAL:** 10 HC; 11 S Euch. Jackson in E. 3.30 Ch E.
- BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL:** 9 MP; 9.15 HC; 11 Ch Euch; 4 Ch E. Dyson in D.
- BLACKURN CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 9.15 Ch M. Canon Hall; 10.30 Euch. Mass for four voices (Byrd); 6.30 Carol Service.
- BRISTOL CATHEDRAL:** 7.49 M; 8 HC; 10 Ch Euch. Darke in F. Canon J Simpson; 3.30 Ch E. Balfour in E flat.
- CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 9.30 M; 11 S Euch; 3.15 E. Rochester Service (Vaux); 6.30 Sermon & Compline.
- CARLISLE CATHEDRAL:** 10.30 S Euch. Collegium Regale (Howells); 3 E.
- CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11.15 Ch M. Britten in E; 6 Ch E. Purcell in G minor. Canon D Knight.
- CHESTER CATHEDRAL:** 7.45 L; 8 HC; 10 Euch; 11.30 M. Canon T Dennis; 3.30 Euch. Canon J Marshall.
- CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 10 M. Noble in B minor; 11 S Euch; 3.30 E; 6 Epiphany Procession.
- CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL:** Dublin; 11 S Euch. Canon Marshall; 3.30 Ch E. The Gloucester Service (Howells).
- CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL:** Oxford; 8 HC; 10 M; 11.15 S Euch. Missa Aeterna Christi Muniera (Palestrina); 6 E.
- CORK CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 11.15 S Euch. Rev E W Hunter; 7 Ch E. Cantique de Jean Racine (Faure).
- COVENTRY CATHEDRAL:** 7.40 MP; 8 C; 10.30 Euch; 3 German Lutherans; 5 Ch E. Brewer in E flat.
- DERBY CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 10.45 S Euch. Short Service (Batten); 6 Ch E. Harwood in A flat. Canon G Marshall.
- DURHAM CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 10 M; 11.15 HC; 3.30 E. Moran in D.
- ELY CATHEDRAL:** 8.15 HC; 10.30 S Euch. Darke in F. Rev Dr A MacIntosh; 3.45 Epiphany Procession.
- EXETER CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch. Sunston in F; 11.15 M; 3 E; 6.30 ES.
- GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 10.15 Euch; Canon R Grey; 12.15 HC; 3 E. Walmisley in D minor.
- GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch. Missa Brevis in C (Mozart); 11.30 M. Rev C Sheer; 6.30 Carol Service.
- HEREFORD CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 10 Euch. Little Organ Mass (Haydn). Archdeacon of Hereford; 11.30 M; 3.30 E.
- LEICESTER CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 10 M; 10.30 Euch. Ireland in C; 4 Ch E. First Service (Gibbons). Canon J Leonard.
- LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch. Sermon in G.
- LINCOLN CATHEDRAL:** 7.45 L; 8 HC; 9.30 S Euch. Darke in E; 11.15 M; 12.30 HC; 3.45 E. Rev R Crossland.
- LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 10.30 Euch. Bishop of Warrington; 3 Ch E; 4 HC.
- LANDRAFF CATHEDRAL:** 7.30 M & L; 8.9 Euch; 11 S Euch. Harris in F; 12.15 HC; 10 S Euch. Canon M Mingins; 11.30 Ch C. Darke in F; 3.30 Ch E.
- ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL:** Southwark; 8.10 LM; 11.30 Sol Mass. Mass in G (Mozart). Fr J Boyle; 6 LM.
- ST GILES' CATHEDRAL:** Edinburgh; 8 HC; Mass for four voices (Byrd); 10.30 M; 6 The Tomlin Concert; 8 ES.
- ST MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL:** Old Aberdeen; 11 MS; 6 ES. Rev R Frazer.
- ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL:** Edinburgh; 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch; 3.30 Ch E.
- ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL:** Glasgow; 8.30 Euch; 10.30 Euch; 12 Euch; 6.30 Ch E.
- ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL:** 8 HC; 8.45 M; 11 S Euch; 3.15 E. Wood in E.
- RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL:** SW7; 10.30 Divine Liturgy. Kievan and traditional polyphony. Met Anthony.
- ALL SAINTS:** W1; 8 LM; 10.20 MP; 11 HM; 6.15 LM; 6 Lessons & Carols.
- CHELSEA OLD CHURCH:** SW3; 8 HC; 10 Children's Service; 11 M. Rev Dr P Ely; 12.15 HC; 6 E.
- CROWN COURT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND:** WC2; 11.15 MS. Rev S Hood; 6.30 ES.
- FARM STREET:** W1; 8.9.30 LM; 11 HM; 12.30 LM; 4.15 Mass; 6.15 LM.
- HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON:** SW7; 9 HC; 11 MS; 5.7.30 Informal Service.
- HOLY TRINITY:** SW7; 8.45 Euch; 11 S Euch. Mass in the Phrygian Mode (Wood).
- THE ORATORY:** SW7; 7.8.9.10.11 Mass.
- ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH:** W8; 11 Holy Mass. Archbishop Y Gibrarian.
- WESLEY'S CHAPEL:** EC2; 9.45 HC; 11 MS. Rev Dr L Griffiths.
- ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran):** Gresham St. EC2; 11 Ch Euch. Rev G Neumann; 7 Ch Vespers.
- ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT:** EC1; 9 HC; 11 M. Collegium Regale (Howells); 6.30 Ch Euch. Missa Puer Natus Est Nobis (Tallis). Rev M Marshall.
- ST BRIDES:** EC4; 11 Ch M & Euch. Short Service (Gibbons). Canon J Oates; 6.30 Ch E. Watson in E.
- ST CLEMENT DANES:** WC2; 11 Ch Euch. Missa Brevis in C (Mozart). Rev D Mackay.
- ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND:** SW1; 11. Rev D Bush; 6.30.
- ST ETHELREDA'S:** EC1; 11 S Mass. Little Organ Mass (Haydn).
- ST GEORGE'S:** W1; 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch. Missa Brevis (Wilton).
- ST JAMES'S:** Garlickhythe. EC4; 10.30 S Euch.
- ST JAMES'S:** W1; 9.15 HC; 11 S Euch. Neil Whitehouse; 5.45 EP.
- ST JOHN'S:** E15; 11 Family Service; Rev M Ostell; 6.30 HC Rev D Richards.
- ST LUKE'S:** SW8; 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch; 6.30 E. Rev J Steering.
- ST MARK'S:** NW1; 8 HC; 9.45 Family C; 11 Euch. Missa Brevis (Gabrieli). Rev T Dewhurst; 6.30 ES.
- ST MARGARET'S:** SW1; 10 M; 11 S Euch. Rev P Cowell; 3E; 5.45 Organ Recital; John Hosking; 6.30 ES.
- ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS:** WC2; 8 HC; 9.45 Euch; 11.30 Visitors Service; 2.45 Chinese Service; 5 Ch E; 6.30 ES.
- ST MARY ABOYS CHURCH:** SW8; 8 HC; 9 Euch. Rev P Stubbs; 11.15 Ch M; 12.30 HC; 6.30 E.
- ST MARY'S:** SW1; 9.10 LM; 11 HM. Missa Puer Natus Est Nobis (Lassus). Canon Lord Piquette; 7.30 perdue (Lassus). Canon Lord Piquette; 6.30 E & B; 7 LM.
- ST MARY-THE-VIRGIN:** NW3; 8 HC; 10.30 Euch. Missa Brevis Capella Regalis (Caesar); 6 EP.
- ST MARYLEBONE:** NW1; 8 HC; 11 Ch Euch. Missa Brevis in D (Mozart).
- ST PETER'S:** SW1; 8.15 HC; 11 Family Euch; 11 S Euch. Messe Basse (Faure). Fr D B Tilley.
- CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCULA:** HM Tower of London; 9.15 HC; 11 M. Short Service (Gibbons). Rev P R C Abrahm.
- CHAPEL ROYAL:** St James's Palace; 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP. 1 Sing of a Maiden (Berkeley).
- CHAPEL ROYAL:** Hampton Court Palace; 8.30 HC; 11 M. Farrant; 11 F minor; 3.30 E. Short Service (Ayleward).
- GROSVENOR CHAPEL:** South Audley St. W1; 11 S Euch. Missa Quarti Toni (Victoria). Rev S J Hobbs.
- THE TEMPLE CHURCH:** EC4; 8.30 HC; 11.15 M. Rev T R Cole. Band of the Blues and Royals; 12 HC.
- ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE CHAPEL:** SE10; 11 S Euch. Darke; 1 E. Rev R Norton.

When the holly is gone and the house has resumed its habitual decoration of newspapers, there seems every reason to feel bleak?

# Roll on the blooming crocuses ...

LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

There is no one in the world who can keep a dying fall going the way I can — unless, perhaps, it is Alexander — so you can imagine the deep cloud of melancholy that has been hanging about the house, the arrival of the Three Kings having heralded a return to London, the dismantling of the Christmas tree and the end of the school holidays.

Let's go and look at the *Curly Sark*. "I say since this usually cheers us both up. But along the waterfront the path is lined with the corpses of Christmas trees for whom Twelfth Night has come early. Stripped of their tinsel, they lie in the gutters, catching at the legs of passers-by with their naked branches. On one of these a single gold ribbon bow glimmers forlornly.

"That's not going to happen to our Christmas tree, is it?" Alexander says. Ohblimey. Well, I say cautiously, the tree will be there when you go back to school, and it will still be there when you come home on the first day, but the following morning it will be gone, and that's because we are thinking about the new thing, which is the new year. (Occasionally I amaze even myself with

my capacity to talk sanctimonious rot.)

Neither of us is very convinced by this optimism. It must be said, is not really my big thing, and so we gloom around the house a bit more, with Alexander repeating, dirge-like, "It will be there in the morning and there when I get back from school, but the next day it will be gone", interspersed with hideous fits of coughing. He has caught my TB and I can see he thinks that, if he works on it, it may preserve him from having to go back to school.

"The agony is so dreadful, I cannot move," he remarked on Tuesday morning, in the accents of the young Lord Macaulay. The news that the Telly-rubbies were on the box (but the young Macaulay wouldn't have cared for them), however, caused him to put on a remarkable turn of speed, so I took it that the agony had somewhat abated, and I dragged him, sobbing piteously, off to Dotheboys Hall.

I must say, I would very much like to

know how he reconciles his passionate interest in Darth and Jabba and Jabba's horrid little friend Salacious Crumb, with his devotion to the emetic inhabitants of Tellyrubbyland. Only this doesn't seem quite the moment to ask. Still, I suppose there are grown-ups who are equally keen on, let us say, *Reservoir Dogs* and *It's a Wonderful Life*. I return from the emotional workout at the school gates in a fearful state of self-pity. Of course there are moments while it is all going on when one longs for it to end. But now, when the holly and the ivy and the orchestra of tin angels, and the swarms of fat little *putti* (always so broody-

making) and the cheerful glow of the fairy lights on the glass icicles are gone, and the house has resumed its habitual decoration of piles of semi-digested newspapers and periodicals, and there are two whole months to get through before one can even think of the crocuses coming into bloom, there seems every reason to feel a bit bleak. On the other hand, my list of things to worry about has shrunk dramatically — the result of an end-of-year flurry of activity which has meant that our socks are free from holes, our possessions are neatly arranged in alphabetical order, every garment we own is marked with a Cash's name tape,

and if I have not actually engaged the services of a sweep (Dick Van Dyke's remarkable performance in *Mary Poppins* on New Year's Day having acted as a dramatic *aide-memoire*), I have at least formed a firm intention of doing so. So really, the only thing left to fret about when I wake in the small hours is the mallards.

Of all things, the mallards were a present from Charles. He had come up to London to visit his shirtmaker and his sock-knitter and the place where they sell those bits of coloured tape to put around your leg in which Lord Baden-Powell always looked so fetching. And John Lewis for some striped sheets. And since he was obliged to quit Wiltshire for Babylon, perhaps he would look in on me while he was at it and give me a hot lunch.

So he arrived on the doorstep with disconcerting promptness at 13.00 hours precisely, arms full of bundles and in one

hand a plastic carrier from which protruded, nudging genially, two feathered heads, one brown, one emerald green. "Thought you might like these. Make sure you hang 'em up," he said, before launching into a description of where and how they met their ends that lasted for most of lunch.

Well, now, I like to fancy that I am never happier than with my hand sunk to the wrist in a bird's abdominal cavity. But I haven't been called upon to tackle a duck before. They looked, this pair, dauntingly large and feathery. Not to mention well travelled — all the way from Wiltshire to Greenwich, by way of Jermyn Street and John Lewis's bed-linen department.

This is a draughty house and so I tend to overheat it. Outside, the weather was unseasonably mild. I looked at the four orange feet dangling limply from the anti-burglar grille, still caked in the friendly mud of their home pond. And I thought that after I had plucked them, I would still have to take the Christmas tree down. Suddenly I felt absolutely sick of being a competent adult. I picked up the telephone. "Daddy," I said. "I've got these two ducks. ..."

## Mothering the mother eases labour pains

Mihael Magenis reports on an American idea being imported to Britain to ease mothers through childbirth

Every woman in labour needs little help. Some use pokkers. Others prefer Mozart or the sounds of wiles yawning. A sympathetic midwife can be supportive but will phone at the end of her shift. A man partner, on the other hand, can be no practical advice about what's going on.

In the days of the extended family and home births the expectant mother's relatives, friends or neighbours would stay with the mother during labour, giving help and advice at the rise of the nuclear family and social mobility has all but ended that.

Now, however, the new mother can use a doula — a Greek word meaning "servant" or "attendant". They are becoming increasingly popular in the United States, where midwives have been largely pushed aside by obstetricians in the huge high-tech hospitals. A doula will stay with the mother throughout labour, acting as her ally and using her own birth experiences to reassure and help her.

So far there is no recognised national organisation for doulas in Britain, but that is set to change. A five-day course has been organised by Jean Birles at Glastonbury, Somerset, with the help of Karen Ledbetter, a Californian doula, at which potential doulas will be trained in such things as "the physiology of labour and delivery", "emotional support of the mother during childbirth" and "facilitating a birth plan together".

Sheila Kitzinger, a childbirth expert and social psychologist, has always been aware of the system. "In the Middle Ages, mothers might have six or seven women with them when they gave birth," she says. "We were often neighbours and we were there to nurture the mother during and

after the birth. They were called God Sibs (sisters in God), which men then turned into 'gossips', perhaps because they felt excluded from this female mystery."

Ms Kitzinger has established a doula system for women giving birth in prison where, at present, they are mostly accompanied only by the wardens. "In this country we especially need doulas for women who are the most deprived," she says. "I'm interested in the women



In the past mothers had numerous helpers

who feel vulnerable and isolated." She is also working with refugees and women who do not speak English, or do not understand the medical system.

Ms Birles, however, operates at the other end of the scale. She runs Top Notch Nannies, an agency based in west London. Her doulas help the wealthy women of Kensington. "A woman in labour needs someone comforting with her, someone tactile," she says. "Fathers

can do this but they don't know what's happening. The doula helps him, too: she encourages him to change nappies, feed the baby and so on. A father can feel left out and it's important that he does not feel excluded."

Ms Birles's doulas are similar to the Dutch system of Maternity Care Assistants. In Holland, where about one-third of births are at home, the doulas support the midwife and then help the mother with the laundry, cooking and give her advice about the baby.

If you arrange a doula from Top Notch Nannies, she will do what the new mother wants her to do when the baby arrives home — make tea, pop a casserole in the oven, take an elder sibling to the park, run the washing machine. The cost is £10 an hour for a recommended minimum of 15 hours a week.

Sylvia McGinnis is a London-based childbirth educator and doula, though her role ends with the birth and does not extend past the delivery room. "I see my role as mothering the mother," she says. "Women in labour are in a special state and they do need their mothers."

However, with the increasing age of women having their first child, often their mothers are too old and have, perhaps, forgotten their childbirth experiences. Ms McGinnis notes that in Australia, many women use their grandmothers as birth partners, as the emotional tie is not so strong as it would be with their own mothers. It can also be a very emotional experience for an older woman.

Ms McGinnis is careful to explain that she is not there to usurp the midwife. "The word midwife comes from the Middle English, meaning 'with a woman'. But sometimes at a hospital they might



Debra Kluck, left, with her daughters Isabel, two and a half, and Alexandra, two weeks, who is being fed by Brigid Hall, the doula

not have the necessary woman power to assert the mother's rights and needs.

"A doula is with the woman all the time and is attentive and supportive of her needs. A midwife cannot always do that — she is looking after more than one mother at a time and she's on a shift system."

Ms Kitzinger says: "We might not need doulas if we had one-to-one midwifery, but midwives need help, too, and the doulas offer support to them as well."

Ms McGinnis usually meets her expectant mothers eight weeks before the baby is due, at the childbirth classes she runs. Obviously there has to be a personal

chemistry between her and the mother. A bond has to be formed with the father, too.

Sometimes this can be a problem. "If the father and I couldn't hit it off," Ms McGinnis says, "I would have to say that I couldn't help the couple, and I hope that the mother and her partner would feel the same way."

Sometimes, she says, she replaces the father, if he is not willing to be in at the birth. And even if he is happy to be part of the process, Ms McGinnis finds that fathers are glad to have her there as a

supportive and knowledgeable ally. Ms Kitzinger backs this up. "The father appreciates the support the doula gives his partner. She'll show him some useful massage and how to help generally. It's important the doula does not crowd the man out."

Doulas also have a positive medical affect, according to a partisan American book, *Mothering the Mother: How a Doula Can Help You Have a Shorter, Easier and Healthier Birth* by Kennell, Klaus and Kennell.

The authors claim that the use of a doula can reduce the mother's chances of having a caesarean birth by 50 per cent, reduce the odds of a forceps delivery by 40 per cent, result in a 25 per cent shorter time in labour and generally cut down on the need for painkillers, such as epidurals. And all through the powers of knowledge and reassurance.

"Doulas don't offer medical diagnosis or treatment," Ms Birles says, "but they are trained to recognise signs of trouble in a newborn baby. Just as importantly, they can reassure parents that the occasional sneeze or blotchy skin are nothing to worry about."

For details of the doula training course call 0171 937 0352.

## Boy stories target young readers

Girls perform better at school than boys — and that's official according to statistics released this week. Not only are girls gaining more university places, but they are outperforming boys at GCSE levels in all but one local authority, and are streaks ahead in core subjects — even at the age of seven.

According to education experts, this is largely because boys do not share their female counterparts' enthusiasm for reading. So the arrival of Boyz Own, a new reading list of titles with boy appeal, is rather timely. It will almost certainly be snapped up by teachers and is already being sought by concerned parents of boys who seem uninterested in books.

Compiled by the booksuppliers Books for Students, the eight-page list concentrates on zappy, action-packed fiction: information books; books with covers whose street-cred appearance belies the simplicity of the text inside; humour; true life adventure and mystery stories; sport and, inevitably (but not overwhelmingly), horror.

From the Booker Prize downwards, the world of books and "literature" conspires against boys: on the whole, boys prefer to read books of facts and girls prefer stories, yet we only recognise the latter as bona fide "literature" as a children's book reviewer, I cannot help noticing with amazement how many of the Boyz Own titles have ended up on my own "not to review" pile. I am conditioned to think of narratives — in other words, girls' books — as more appropriate.

We underestimate the reading that boys get through. With a boy, is peering over football

Sarah Johnson on a bold new effort to persuade Britain's boys that books are "cool" after all



Children's titles are typically aimed at girls

results or clicking on a CD-Rom he is "idling". When a girl reads a story she is "expanding her imagination" and wins approval.

Publishers have a heavy responsibility for this bias. According to the Children's Literature Research Centre, many children's publishers just "assume boys don't read" and market their books directly at girls.

That is why the paperback edition of Jostein Gaarder's bestselling *Sophie's World* has a sugar-pink wrapper, adorned with a fluffy bunny. The cover alone tells boys that they have no right to be interested in anything as intellectual as philosophy.

Publishers send me towering piles of self-help and healthcare books aimed at teenage girls, but I have never seen equivalent titles aimed at teenage boys. The Boyz Own list, however, has introduced me to *Professor Protein's Fitness, Health, Hygiene and Relaxation Tonic*, a cartoon-illustrated guide to a healthy lifestyle; and to *Living with a Willy*, a cheerful guide to puberty.

Although schools minister Stephen Byers has just launched an attack on what he calls "laddish anti-learning culture", clever librarians have long recognised that peer pressure has restricted boys' reading, and have placed boy-oriented titles on the returns trolley to

suggest that other boys read these books. Series such as *Goosebumps*, for instance, are liked by boys because they are collectibles and have the "cool" cachet of being slightly forbidden. Boys also respond quickly to signals from heroes: a current poster campaign in primary schools shows football star Ian Wright curled up with a book.

Real-life football heroes are all very well, but where are the heroes in books? Boys have suffered at least two decades of being ignored, down-graded and vilified in fiction. There are plenty of strong male role models in pre-1970s fiction, but most parents would be reluctant to feed their boys a steady diet of old-fashioned Enid Blyton, Jennings or Biggles sexism in which the girls set out the picnic while the boys go exploring. Yet current authors go too far the other way.

Take Jacqueline Wilson, for instance, who writes funny, realistic, complex and sensitive stories — but whose central character is invariably a noisy female. The books shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal this year were also full of strong female characters: males, such as those in the Carnegie winner, Melvin Burgess's *Junk*, were portrayed as weaklings.

Although the National Literacy Trust believes that male teachers are essential role models for boys in primary schools, fathers are the real key to getting boys reading. Yet in many homes, reading is associated with mothers.

So the answer to helping your non-reading boy seems to be: get a copy of the Boyz Own list — and make his father read it.



Boys prefer to read factual material, while girls go for stories

Emma Houghton meets couples who found that working together can make or break a relationship



Judy Finnegan and Richard Madeley have struck a balance between work and home

When the wife means business

Love it or loathe it, work is often a sanctuary from home. On Monday morning, most of us can trade the weekend's domestic disputes for the lesser emotional demands of the office. But what if your family life is professional as well as personal? For some, like TV's Anthea Turner who parted last week from her husband Peter Powell, who is also her agent, it might have proved too much.



Cilla Black's marriage to Bobby has stood the test of time

Just weeks after their wedding the couple sat down and planned their careers with military precision. Peter Powell used to say that he marketed his wife as if he were selling a car — hardly the most romantic of notions. Other high-profile marriages have foundered on the rocks of business partnerships. Elizabeth Emanuel, who with her husband and business partner David created the Princess of Wales's wedding dress, is only too aware of difficulties of living and working together. "It puts a strain on any marriage," says the designer, who is no longer married. "It's a miracle we stayed together for 15 years. If you've been arguing about hems all day, you don't feel like going home and leaping into bed together."

There are, however, many who strike a balance between business and domestic partnerships: breakfast television presenters Richard Madeley and Judy Finnegan; Dame Vera Lynn and her husband, Harry Lewis, who is also her agent; and Cilla Black and her

husband and manager Bobby all enjoy marriages which have withstood the test of time. The trick, says Barbara Taylor Bradford, the best-selling novelist, is to give each other space. Her business partnership with her husband, Bob Bradford, has lasted 19 years, her marriage for 34. While Barbara works from their Manhattan and Connecticut homes, Bob spends weekdays in his New York office, handling the marketing, publicity and finances, and producing films and mini-series for her books. He is rarely home before 7pm. "It would get tiresome being under each other's feet all the



Barbara Taylor Bradford's business partnership with her husband Bob has lasted 19 years, her marriage for 34

time," admits Barbara. "This gives us the space we need." Even so, they regularly talk business. Early risers, they organise their work and social schedules at 6am, and often call each other during the day. "We're so attuned that I know when I can talk to her and when she doesn't want to be disturbed," says Bob. Do they have any rules about separating work from pleasure? "Not really," says Barbara. "You get a routine, being married and in business together. You find a way of operating on a very congenial level. There's no conflict, but we're both very opinionated and lock horns at times — I

call him The General and he calls me Napoleon." Ultimately, both believe the business has strengthened their marriage. "We're still very much in love," says Bob. According to Ms Cole, there are advantages in combining business with home: the freedom to be honest with each other in decision-making, the sense of a joint venture, and the chance to work together creatively — all of which can keep couples together. It also helps if you are both workaholics, says Nick Knight, who, for ten years, has run his photography business

with his wife Charlotte Wheeler. Recent projects include a Christian Dior campaign and Björk album cover. Work is what they do for pleasure, insists Nick. "We love it," he says. "There's no division between private and business; we don't see ourselves as talking shop because it's our lives." Charlotte, 32, Nick's agent and adviser, is equally committed. "When we go on holiday, I constantly talk about work. Nick ends up telling me to shut up." Their business is based in a small office in their London house, where a full-time nanny helps with their three children. Although mornings

are usually spent together sorting appointments, taxes and finances, days in the Knight household are invariably chaotic: clients and contacts come and go, while Nick often works erratic hours. Aside from holding it all together, Charlotte provides essential advice and support. Nick says: "Although I'm the one who clicks the shutter, it's a joint effort. Charlotte is involved from the conception of an idea through to choosing the final picture." But with work so central to their relationship, could they survive without it? "If Nick had to stop taking photographs, he would be a very



The strain of working together proved too much for Anthea Turner and Peter Powell

miserable person — I would cause difficulties," admits Charlotte. Nick is more optimistic. "We may be stressed, but our love is more important. It was formed by my work, but if I had to stop it wouldn't disappear. We decided to raise goats in Cumbria, that would be fine."

Not surprisingly, however, working with your partner doesn't always work out. It's advice that might have saved Nick's four-year relationship with Tom. The couple, who preferred their surnames not to be published, met at a London workshop where she made hats and he made violins. With more muck in millinery, Tom began helping Alice cut the fabric and sell hats. They became involved, and moved to Lymington. "It was very good in the beginning," says Alice, 31. "If you like someone, it's nice to spend all your time with them, but it became austrophobic." They also had different views on how the business should develop. "I wanted a shop, but he thought was a risk we couldn't afford." With no one for anything but work, eventually the relationship soured — "It got boring. We did the same things all day and had nothing else to talk about — and after 18 months they drifted apart. I think the business destroyed our relationship," says Alice. "It took over our lives and we stopped communicating. If we could have had a bit of space between us and what we did, it might have been OK."

ANIMALS & ACCESSORIES

Advertisement for 'ANIMALS & ACCESSORIES' featuring various pet products and services. Includes sections for 'PET DOORS', 'PET RESCUE', 'ANIMAL HEALTH', 'DOG INSURANCE', 'PET LIFE', 'Vetbed', and 'PET INSURANCE'. Contact information: TEL: 0171 680 6122, FAX: 0171 782 7799.

SPECIAL INTEREST

Advertisement for 'SPECIAL INTEREST' featuring travel and holiday packages. Includes sections for 'JORDAN', 'JASMIN', 'PAKISTAN', 'FROM THE ALPS TO SAMOS TO S. AFRICA', 'planning the trip', 'Walk with Waymark', 'Experience the Unexpected', and 'EXODUS'. Contact information: TEL: 01420 541007, TEL: 01707 331133.

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# Where's the fast-forward on this thing?

**O**f all the eternal mysteries — does God exist? Is there life, complete with Twiggles and chicken tikka, anywhere else in our universe? — the one that still gives us the most sleepless nights is: what do cats really like to watch on television?

Peter Neville, an animal behaviourist, thinks he knows. He has made two videos, *Cool for Cats* and *Cool for Dogs*. They are not quite *Baywatch*, but they are supposed to keep Tibby or Fido amused when you abandon them at home.

Pets can get tetchy if left alone all day. Practical-minded people get around this problem by keeping pets they can actually see when "pet tetchiness" sets in (or when the pizza is too busy to deliver): a nice haddock, for example.

Other pets earn their keep by providing companionship. Or by acting as tasters for food that seems a shame to throw away, but which is two weeks past its sell-by date. But anyone who has seen pets in action knows they can be drier things.

Dogs, for instance, fritter away whole years of their lives doing things such as burying bones and then digging up half of Hampshire trying to find them — the sort of pointless exercise that would be meat and drink to, say, a large quango, but which just makes a mess when carried out by a dog.

Somehow, this sort of behaviour doesn't stop owners from thinking that their pooch is highly intelligent and thus needs constant mental stimulation: a survey of Britain's dog owners in *Good Housekeeping* a while back found that a third of them were convinced that their pet was as brainy as a nine-year-old child.

There are even dog owners who reckon some pooches are as smart as the average graduate, which may say more about our education problems than about our dogs. These are presumably just the sort of people who feel their pets need an entertaining dog video when they are out at work.

So this is exactly where *Cool for Cats* and *Cool for Dogs* should come to a grateful nation's aid. But do they? And what made Dr Neville think that he had been chosen to be the Fellini of the pet world?

"I was in Harrods doing a book-signing," he says, "and Mike Leander, who is Gary Glitter's manager and who used to drum with the Rolling Stones — bought one of my books."

"He said he had these two cats, in central London, and

Like it or not, animal TV is here.

Joe Joseph meets the man behind videotapes tailor-made for Tiddles

couldn't let them out because they'd get run over. So we came up with the idea of the cat video."

Basically, *Cool for Cats* is a fast-moving series of short clips: seagulls, rabbits eating carrots, a white mouse, guinea pigs, a clockwork mouse racing across a kitchen floor, goldfish, foxgloves, birds eating a swan, dolphins, a Jack Russell, a ball of wool, a duck, a weird little blue square that

Hollywood would term lavish productions: the entire production budgets might keep Arnold Schwarzenegger in shoeleaves for maybe six hours. And to be frank, both videos lack a certain something — in technical, cinematographic jargon — a plot.

"The cat one is basically fast, erratic movement and high-pitched noises," Dr Neville says. "Their ears are attuned to the sound of rodents."

So what's with the rabbits squeaking and the ducks barling? "It's just to lighten it up a bit," he says. "There's no deep psychological reason. Just fast-moving images. The cat one also has supersonic noise. The dog video is a relaxation tape."

And the blue square? "Just an erratic image, just as if you throw a ball of newspaper in front of a cat, it can't help following it."

"*Cool for Cats* was designed to keep a highly sensory animal amused. It's for cats who are kept indoors — 10 per cent of cats are house-bound — and who are, therefore, much more likely to develop behavioural problems. They are more likely to be aggressive, bored, listless and overweight."

"They are less of a cat than a cat should be. They are never able to deal with any sort of challenge, because they have never faced any."

So we tested them ourselves, helped by our house-trained assistant Caroline, her dog Laila, and her cat, Mishkin. Result? "It took several dog biscuits to get nine-month-old Laila to sit in front of the television, and five minutes into the film her eyes had not moved off the last dog biscuit in my hand."

Was nine-year-old Mishkin any more co-operative? "Two minutes in to the film, my arms were scratched and bleeding and Mishkin was nowhere to be seen."

But who's to say they won't catch on? Cynics slapped their thighs in mirth when they first saw people rolling up tobacco leaves, setting fire to them and



Dogs, according to Dr Neville, are natural television watchers. "They like nature programmes and ball games"

were OK for viewing by pets of any age: not even PG.

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But who's to say they won't catch on? Cynics slapped their thighs in mirth when they first saw people rolling up tobacco leaves, setting fire to them and

then breathing in the smoke, and look how that wacko idea took off.

**Y**ou can already glimpse the future across the Atlantic, where Michael Marcovsky, a cable industry entrepreneur, has launched *My Pet Television Network* in Los Angeles, hoping to attract an audience from the sort of people who send their dogs to personal trainers and their cats to summer camp.

*My Pet TV* already produces videos for animal shelters and 7,500 veterinary clinics. But a recent trial broadcast went much further, including minor celebrity interviews of Hollywood's "Rich and Furry" and reviews of *Lassie*.

Marcovsky's Palomino pony lip-synched the phrase, "You're watching *My Pet TV*" in programme breaks. OK, so the *Los Angeles Times* said it was low-budget and looked in; but the paper actually reviewed it, for Pete's sake.

Then again, Marcovsky is aiming at a sophisticated audience weaned on pet videos such as *Kitty Safari*, which gives American feline viewers 25 minutes of birds, mice and squirrels. The next thing you know there will be a *Pets Movie Channel* offering specially adapted versions of *Reservoir Dogs*.

But what, exactly, are the ratings for audience response? What reactions, for example, did Dr Neville receive to, say, *Cool for Cats*?

"What we have found is that there are three types of cat," he says. "Those who stay indoors permanently enjoyed it. A small percentage became obsessed by it and wouldn't let their owner put on anything else."

"And there was another bunch who couldn't give a stuff: they are usually cats who have the opinion of going out."

Both Dr Neville's videos have sold well, usually as gifts. A sequel? *Cats II — The Horror Continues*, maybe? Or even a snuff movie with mice? "Not at the moment."

## A VET WRITES

**Q** The senior classes at my daughter's primary school visit a farm during spring term and Sally, who will be ten this year, has never had much contact with living animals, though she is a compulsive watcher of animal-based television programmes. I worry about the disease risks if she comes close to, and maybe touches, sheep, cows and pigs. Am I being over-protective?

**A** You are. There are a few diseases we can catch from farm animals — many more are caught from humans. Sally is more likely to catch something from her fellow pupils than by looking at little pigs, stroking a calf or cuddling a lively lamb. "Now wash your hands" applies after handling any animal — as it does in other circumstances that might involve faecal contamination. Television pictures are fine, but touch and smell complete the picture. I hope Sally has a wonderful day.

**Q** I have been told one should not give pig liver to a dog, even in small quantities. Is this so?

**A** An ounce or so of pig's liver, cooked or raw, will not do any harm to any normal dog. If a yorkie or chihuahua ate half a pound of raw liver — pig, calf, sheep or chicken — it would be likely to have acute diarrhoea. I have not heard this "pig-liver" warning before, but all old wives' tales sprout from a grain of truth. There is a strange inherited disorder, almost totally confined to Bedlington terriers, whereby copper accumulates in the dog's liver and causes fatal damage. Copper is present in small quantities in most foods and is essential to life, but when an unfortunate Bedlington develops copper toxicosis, it must have a diet containing as little copper as possible. And pig liver contains more than other varieties.

**Q** My two-year-old neutered cat, Timothy, started to stray from our garden last year and I am afraid this wanderlust will become worse. I have been told that if we greet catnip in the garden he would be more inclined to stay put. What is catnip, and would it help?

**A** *Nepeta cataria* is the botanical name of cat-mint or catnip. It is a hardy herbaceous plant with a blue flower that produces a compound called nepetalactone — a drug that repels insects and turns cats on. It is the cat equivalent of cannabis. Some cats can't leave it alone and behave in a most peculiar fashion when they're on a nepeta trip. It will probably encourage Timothy to spend more time at home so that he can get high, but his friends — and enemies — might flock to your garden to join in the rave.

JAMES ALLCOCK

Write to The Times Vet, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

Having pets in the workplace is good for them — and for people's morale. Carol Price meets contestants at this week's annual Dogs at Work Awards

**W**hen Ollie the rottweiler met Gemma the Labrador this week in the ballroom of a Park Lane hotel, you sensed canine chemistry of a chandelier-rocking kind. Much more soppy eye contact and they could easily forget that they were there on business, as two of 34 finalists in the annual Dogs at Work Awards.

Dogs who went to work with their owners in schools, offices, hospitals, residential homes, hotels and even in long-distance lorries were all represented at an event which originally drew thousands of entries. The event, organised by the Blue Cross animal charity and *Dogs Today* magazine, was set up to illustrate how dogs and people can both benefit from canine input in the workplace.

Running the gauntlet of a celebrity judging panel, which included actress Jenny Seagrove, racing guru John McCririck and doggy agony aunt Katie Boyle — Mr McCririck's extraordinary whiskers and Miss Boyle's fake fur hat being in danger of upstaging many entrants and winning prizes on their own — contenders spoke of the many

# Come on Rover, time for work

joys and virtues of canine colleagues. Alec Burns, who owns three-year-old Ollie and runs a London packaging firm, claims his dog's duties include assessing job applicants. Or, to put it more bluntly: "If I'm interviewing someone and Ollie jumps up and licks their faces, I'll employ them: if he just looks at them and walks away, I won't. All my staff love Ollie."

Zowie Alexander, a lorry driver for a large aquatic-plant nursery in Middlesex, says her job would be untenable without the companionship of her German shepherd, Tulsa. She says: "He makes a great difference to my sense of security and is very protective of me and my vehicle. Without him I'd definitely think twice about stopping in lay-bys at night."

Driving a 17-ton lorry for up to 1,200 miles at a stretch can



Jenny Seagrove with Elvira Meucci and winner Suki

also be a lonely business. She says: "Not only is he good company but he gives me an extra incentive to stay alert." Miss Alexander says an increasing number of lorry drivers take dogs with them on the road, "and all of them stress how they could never be without them".

Several studies have shown how dogs can lessen human anxiety. And in America recently, it was shown that people can complete mental tasks more quickly and efficiently with a canine, rather than human, companion in close attendance.

Sheffield Coroner Chris Dorries, who owns a Labrador, Gemma, thinks her office role

is as "stress relief manager" is invaluable. He says: "Every week my staff have to deal without about 80 sudden deaths — drug fatalities, possible suicides, the sort of deaths where dad goes out for a takeaway one day and never comes back. For the staff, and for grieving relatives who come into us, it can be immensely distressing, and just having a dog to pat can be tremendously soothing."

He says: "Gemma will sense people's disquiet but never harass them. And she will always help you with your sandwiches." Unfortunately she has also chewed her way through a computer mouse, a £600 hearing aid and



Zowie Alexander, lorry driver, and her German shepherd Tulsa. "I wouldn't stop in lay-bys at night without him"

a pager. The leading dog behaviourist David Appleby says that a working life with owners can only be good news for pets. He says: "At least 14 per cent of the behaviour problems that I see arise from dogs being left on their own at home during the day. But if dogs are going into the workplace, they have to be well behaved. You have to introduce them gradually into the

office environment." The supreme Dogs at Work champion emerged as Suki, a two-year-old ex-Battersea Dogs Home Labrador/whippet cross belonging to Elvira Meucci, Miss Meucci, who takes Suki to work at a London advertising agency, says: "People in advertising take themselves too seriously. A dog brings them down to earth."

While Ollie and Gemma were swapping phone numbers, Miss Meucci found herself being dragged "back to earth" and out of the hotel doors faster than a racing husky sledge by a dog in dire need of a "comfort break" in Park Lane. Bright lights, applause and meeting people all take their toll on the canine bladder.

Many bosses could argue that dogs don't always have the most appealing habits and maybe they don't. But how many of us could say, hand on heart, that we haven't shared an office, at some time, with something worse than a nine-stone rottweiler?

For details of how you can enter the 1998 Dogs at Work Awards, send an SAE (marked Dogs at Work Awards) to the Blue Cross, Skilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PS.

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**Having a dog to pat can be very soothing**

ma will sense people's disquiet but never harass them. And she will always help you with your sandwiches." Unfortunately she has also chewed her way through a computer mouse, a £600 hearing aid and

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**Flying weekend break.** Win your wings in a Tomahawk aircraft during a weekend at the Angel Hotel, Midhurst, West Sussex (01730 812421). Flights are also available in a hot-air balloon or a microlight. Prices from £135 per night, including one-hour flight.  
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**Certificated first aid.** A useful course to start the new year at Braziers, Ipsden, Wallingford, Oxon (01491 682221). Price £12.  
**Computers without consternation:** Texture in landscape. How to be a freelance writer. All this weekend at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). Price, residential, from £114.

**Henry Moore and 20th-century sculpture.** The one thousand and one knights, the Arthurian legend in literature. Both this weekend at the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price £120, inclusive.  
**Katherine Hepburn. I wish I knew more about opera: The image factor.** All this weekend at Wansfell College, Theydon Bois, Essex (01992 813027). From £85.  
**The story of Extremadura, land of the conquistadors. Improve your French: Comets, their life and death.** This weekend at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset (01460 55866). Day courses from £24, weekend full-board, from £110.

**JANUARY 23-25**  
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**Winter walking in the Cotswolds.** From the Swan Hotel in Bibury, a village famous for its trout stream, medieval cottages and rural life museum. With Compass Holidays of Cheltenham (01242 350642). Price for three days of walking, £165.  
**All that jazz: An introduction to Excel for Windows.** Both at the University of Oxford, Rewley House, Oxford (01865 270360). Prices from £94, inclusive.  
**Archery, canoeing, day-pigeon shooting, ten-pin bowling.** Some activities available any weekend through Anglian Activity Breaks of Norwich, Norfolk (01603 700770). Activities from £20 per day, accommodation from £28 per day.  
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**painting. Alexander technique:** An introduction to local history. This weekend at the Hill Residential Centre, Abergavenny, south Wales (01495 333777). Prices from £88-£103 inclusive.  
**An introduction to beadwork jewellery: Flower painting the easy way: Celtic applique and stained-glass patchwork.** Some introductory arts courses this week-

end at Knuston Hall, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). Price, including full-board accommodation, £88.  
**An introduction to counselling skills: Reflexology: China painting.** This weekend at the Lancashire College, Chorley, Lancashire (01257 260909). Price £96 per course, inclusive.

**A pewter workshop: 20th-century English song: An introduction to astronomy: Atmospheric water-colours.** This weekend at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). Prices £114 residential, £90 non-residential.  
**Collecting teddy bears: History of the visual arts: Astronomy: The complete Internet.** Some of the courses available this weekend at Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Prices from £159 residential, £69 non-residential.  
**The music of Mahler: Discovery of colour in 20th-century art: Bookbinding and repairs.** Three courses this weekend at the Wansfell College, Theydon Bois, Essex (01992 813027). Prices, all inclusive of full-board accommodation, from £85.94.

**An introduction to Persian carpets: Renaissance music weekend: Painting miniatures and silhouettes: Glass engraving for beginners: Glass engraving for beginners: Glass engraving for beginners.** At West Dean College, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 811301). Prices from £150 residential, £97 non-residential.  
**The seven wonders of the world.** At the Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Shrewsbury (01743 355159). Price £28 for the course; accommodation can be arranged locally.  
**Better baking: Tea-time favourites: Chess for beginners, level 2: Stained glass: Watercolour painting for beginners.** This weekend at



Discover teddy bears in Buckinghamshire

the Earnley Concourse, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 670392). Prices £142 residential, £98 non-residential.  
**Taxidermy: Drive a steam train: Try land yachting: Drive a single-seat racing car.** Some of the courses and activities available with Anglian Activity Breaks of Norwich (01603 700770). Prices from £70-£120 per day, depending on the activity. Accommodation from £25, bed and breakfast.

ROBIN NEILLANDS

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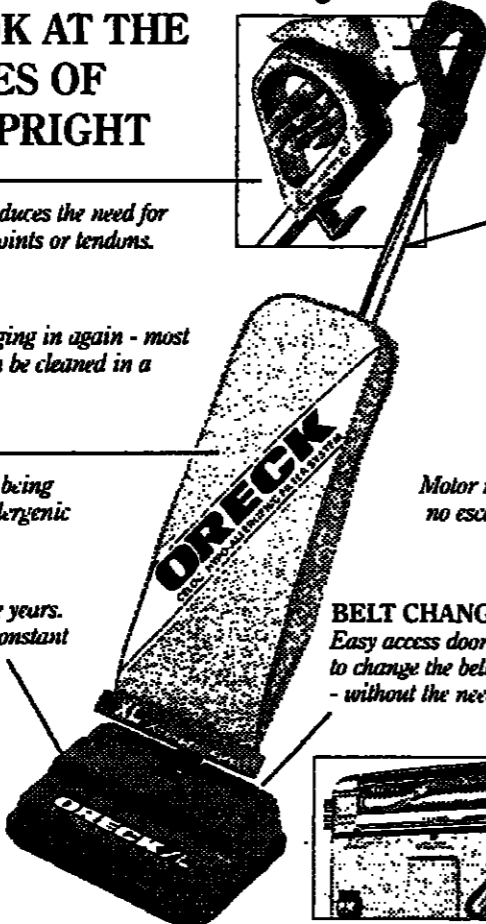
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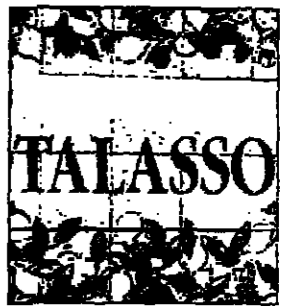
Summer sun 1998: holidays on water

Sail away · 26-28

# THE TIMES TRAVEL

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Kate Abse, watched by brother Patrick, takes the plunge with Scampi the dolphin

## Iguana nights, dolphin days

Paul Abse and his family find a Mexican resort that is as steamy off-camera as it is on film

Thick, bruised clouds crest the Sierra Madre like waves crashing over rocks. The breeze is hinting at another electric light show and welcome downpour. For the time being, however, Puerto Vallarta remains wrapped in a clammy Mexican blanket that suggests one of two courses: stay in your air-conditioned hotel room or hote up in the cantinas and down tequila slammers.

In the 1964 film version of Tennessee Williams's *The Night of the Iguana*, Richard Burton, playing the defrocked Virginian priest turned drunken tour guide, chose the latter course, drinking himself into oblivion on set with Ava Gardner in the day and with new girlfriend Liz Taylor at night. Overnight, the film transformed the sleepy Mexican Pacific coast fishing town into a premier league resort. The director, John Huston, built his home here and remained in it until he died in 1987. Burton and Taylor also lived intermittently here in an area that soon became known as Gringo Gulch.

Our stay coincided with the short, steamy, rainy season that introduces September and October's hurricane-fest. Those travelling out during



WINTER SUN

the next few months, however, will find the temperature more equable, with dry, hot days and balmy nights.

My eight-year-old son, Patrick, expected a Mexico of deserts, iguanas and cactii. Instead, he discovered thick jungle, sweltering heat, Hispanic villages, pterodactyl-like frigate birds and pelicans. My 11-year-old daughter, Kate, expected something cooler — or at least a sea that tingled.

Instead, she got a sauna on the beach, a sauna in the jungle and a sauna in the sea.

The sultry heat induced lethargy, the vibrancy of the country, antic with adventure: we swam between the two. From our sun loungers, the world slipped by, a snafu-garboard of distractions: football, kite-flying, bar and ball games all spontaneously combusting at certain points of the day: a waiter popping a lizard

out of his top pocket tied to a piece of string and stroking it while he waited to take our drinks order; and hawkers offering T-shirts ("One, tequila, two, tequila, three, tequila, floor..."), wind chimes, baskets, rugs, hats and even Batman on a parachute.

*The Night of the Iguana* kept looping through the week. Just offshore was Burton, a fishing boat that almost guaranteed a marlin or tuna trophy, to any would-be Huston willing to sit in pitching deep waters.

Instead we chose the banana boat on a rollicking 20-minute rollercoaster across the bay. Sharing our ride was Stan from Horscham, a man in his early fifties whose face was an old relief map with deep, sun-muddled gulleys.

Stan was leaving the next day and was eager to pass on his experience to the new arrivals. "The hotel's good, the food's fine, the drinks are bloody well nigh-on alcohol free, and the tours are excellent — especially the horse-riding." His only disappointment, like ours — apart from the hotel cocktails — was the murkiness of the sea caused by the Rio Cuale spewing its mountain debris into the Bahía de Banderas during the rainy season.

"Next time I'll come at Easter," he summed up, just before we were tipped into the water with the motorboat's final swish of the tail. As I resurfaced, I noticed our wash was buffeting a couple in the Burton waiting to be taken out to sea. Uncannily, they resembled a disolute Burton and a youngish Taylor, complete with Sixties' bouffant.

Their loud American voices aquaplained across the water. "Cee, do you really think Richard Burton sat here honey?"

"Of course he did, May. Why would they call it *Bur-ton* otherwise?"

We decided we should see what was left of the *Night of the Iguana* set and drove four kilometres into town and another ten out the other side south to a much smaller resort called Mismaloya.

We walked through the hotel grounds of La Jolla de Mismaloya hotel and along a deep-pile sandy beach past a cluster of lively palapa wooden shack restaurants serving beer and fish dishes to locals. At the top of a rocky outcrop, we sat at the open terrace of a bar-restaurant called "The Set".

The children ordered non-alcoholic daiquiris — they tasted more alcoholic than the ones back at the hotel — and my wife and I chose Huston's favourite margaritas. Beneath us, palms, fig and almond trees gave way to the roofless ruins of homes built for the set of the Burton/Gardner film.

The wind blew, and a waiter unselfconsciously danced with a broom beneath sepia-tinged stills from the film. Unlike the Gulf Coast, where Cancun is just another purpose-built resort, Puerto Vallarta is a real Mexican town. Along the Malecón, the seafront esplanade, the Sunday paseo was in full flow when we stopped on the way back from Mismaloya.

We walked past a mariachi band playing from an old wrought-iron pavilion flanked



Palm trees line the streets leading toward the cathedral at Puerto Vallarta, once a fishing town and now a major resort

by orange and almond trees, and passed the packed congregation at the Church of Guadalupe. From a rickety wooden bridge over the River Cuale, we looked out over the craft shops, restaurants and cafes to where dense jungle gnawed at the town's edges.

High above it towered the ragged, rugged switchback of the fabled Sierra Madre.

When we got back to our hotel, the first few raindrops were falling, full and ripe like fruit. Rather than running indoors as at home, we stood outside, heads tilted backwards, enjoying the rain no less than the parched palms.

By morning the clouds had peeled back, leaving a blue sky, and it remained this way for the rest of the holiday.

Time was running short and there was still so much we wanted to pack in. First I took Patrick shrieking his way around the bay on the back of a jet ski; the whole family then took a catamaran cruise past a school of dolphins to an uninhabited island where we snorkelled and kayaked.

On our second-to-last day I took Kate horse riding, and Stan was absolutely right — it had about half an hour in the water with their new pals, but they are still talking about it six months later.

pueblo of thatch and cement, a shrimp farm and domestic cornfields.

Small children greeted us with *Ola amigos*. One called Kate *guapa* (beautiful) and made her blush. We passed candleabra cacti 20ft high, mango, papaya and avocado trees and then entered the dense jungle. Butterflies flickered through sunlit routes of dust as the track plummeted and soared through the steaming forest.

We negotiated muddy gulleys, a fast-flowing river and precipitous mountain traverses. Twice my horse lost its footing on slippery rocks. It was like no riding we had experienced before. Back on the ranch, Kate declared it the finest hack of her life.

But even this trip was to be topped the next day, when we took our two children to swim with dolphins at the Dolphin Adventure centre.

After 30 minutes of instruction, it was time for them to get in the water and shake fins with Scampi and Nina. Patrick roared with laughter as Nina blew into his face. Kate squirmed as Scampi kissed her full on the lips. They only had about half an hour in the water with their new pals, but they are still talking about it six months later.

RONALD GRANT



Gardner and Burton filming *The Night of the Iguana*

### FACT FILE

Paul Abse travelled with Airours (01706 260000) which offers two weeks all-inclusive at the three-star Holiday Inn, Puerto Vallarta, from around £939 per person including flights and transfers throughout the year. Children pay from £614, and there is availability for February and March. Airours can arrange car hire from £25 per day, and has a wide range of outings including town tours, swimming with dolphins, the Sierra Madre hack, day cruises and overnight stays in Guadalupe (Mexico's second city, about 120 miles inland) from around £10.50 to just over £50 per person.

When to go: the peak season for foreign and Mexican visitors is around Christmas and then January. A good time to go is mid-February and March — the crowds are thinner, the weather, though hot, is not yet as steamily humid as high summer, and prices may be slightly lower. The cheapest time to go is June to September, which is also the rainy season (though the showers tend to be short and sharp) and the humid prelude to the September-October hurricane season.

Health: Mexico's Pacific coast is malaria-free and no vaccinations are required, although independent travellers are advised to make sure that they are up-to-date with polio, tetanus, typhoid and hepatitis A jabs.

Tips: English is widely spoken and US dollars are generally accepted (banks give the best exchange rates). If staying in the town, don't miss the Sunday paseo on the Malecón. Travel out with a half-empty suitcase because Puerto Vallarta is good for crafts and ceramics.

Guidebook choice: Mexico (Rough Guides, £10.99); Puerto Vallarta Handbook (Moon Travel Handbook, £9.99). Further information: Mexican Ministry of Tourism (0171-734 1058).

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SUMMER SUN 1998: HOLIDAYS ON WATER

# It's time to sail away

"THE GRAND object of travelling," Dr Johnson told Boswell, "is to see the shores of the Mediterranean." It's still a great truth 200 years on, but the seductive bouillabaisse of blue seas, antiquity, wine, and dancing sunlight can blind us to the reality of the Med in high summer — seething crowds sweltering irritably in a cauterising heat.

If school and family commitments mean you can't holiday out of peak season, there are only two ways to have your Mediterranean dream cake and eat it. The first is to be extremely rich. The second is to get out on to the water. Spread your sails to the cooling breeze and glide away from the heaving beaches to hidden coves where you can



ANGUS CLARKE

swim and siesta in solitude. The nautical holiday also lets you reach the parts which are denied the land-lubber: the coasts of Turkey and Croatia, the Aegean islands, the extraordinary west coast of Corsica — even the terminally built-over Italian Riviera has villages which can be reached only by small boat.

From the pillars of Hercules to the Gulf of Antalya, the options for a water-based holiday are legion: you could learn to windsurf, hire a tall ship, charter a yacht, go scuba-diving, dinghy racing or cultural cruising. And with a little luck you will see dolphins. If you want to rock and roll in the warm blue cradle of European civilisation, here are some options.

**BAREBOAT CHARTER**

**B**areboat charter (you are captain and crew so need to know what you are doing) is your chance to be Odysseus but without the Cyclops — just fly out to the Mediterranean, pick up your fully equipped yacht and set the controls for the heart of the wine-dark sea. This year the Moorings (01227 76677) has 11 yachts operating out of Pula. At the southern tip of Croatia's Istrian peninsula, Pula is well placed for exploring the Gulf of Kvarner and northern Dalmatia — deep channels, steady winds and easy navigation among islands and tiny ports.

Veteran's tip: don't forget to offer a libation to Poseidon.

The charter of an eight-berth Jeanneau Sun Odyssey costs from £2,100 (June 6-July 3) to £2,590 (July 25-Aug 2) per week, not including travel to Pula. Other companies include: Britannia (01489 57789), Dartmouth (01803 834896), Nautilus (01732 867445), Sunsail (01705 222222), Tempelcraft (01273 695094), Tenrag (01227 721874) and Top Yacht (01753 646636).

**FLOTILLA HOLIDAYS**

**I**f you cannot tell a bowline from a bowsprit you should opt for a flotilla holiday — you crew your own boat in a little

fleet led by an experienced skipper, following a predetermined itinerary each day. Two big names in the flotilla business are Sunsail (01705 222222) and Sunworld Sailing (01273 626294), and the favoured cruising areas are the Ionian (gentle), the Dodecanese (longer passages and can be very windy), and Aegean Turkey (a bit of everything), with the Balearic Islands and the Côte d'Azur not far behind. A two-week flotilla cruise aboard a six-berth Bénéteau Oceanis 320 with Sunsail from Parga on mainland Greece's Ionian coast costs between £491 (departing June 1) and £678 (August 10) per person, including flights and transfers but excluding insurance, food, mooring fees, yacht cleaning and optional excursions.

Veteran's tip: fit your camera with a polarising lens to record those sea blues in all their glory.

Other companies include: Britannia (01489 57789), Cosmes (0181-547 3577), Free Spirit (0181-901 7503), Nautilus (01732 867445), Sailing Holidays (0181-459 8787), Tempelcraft (01273 695094) and Tenrag (01227 721874).

**LUXURY CHARTER**

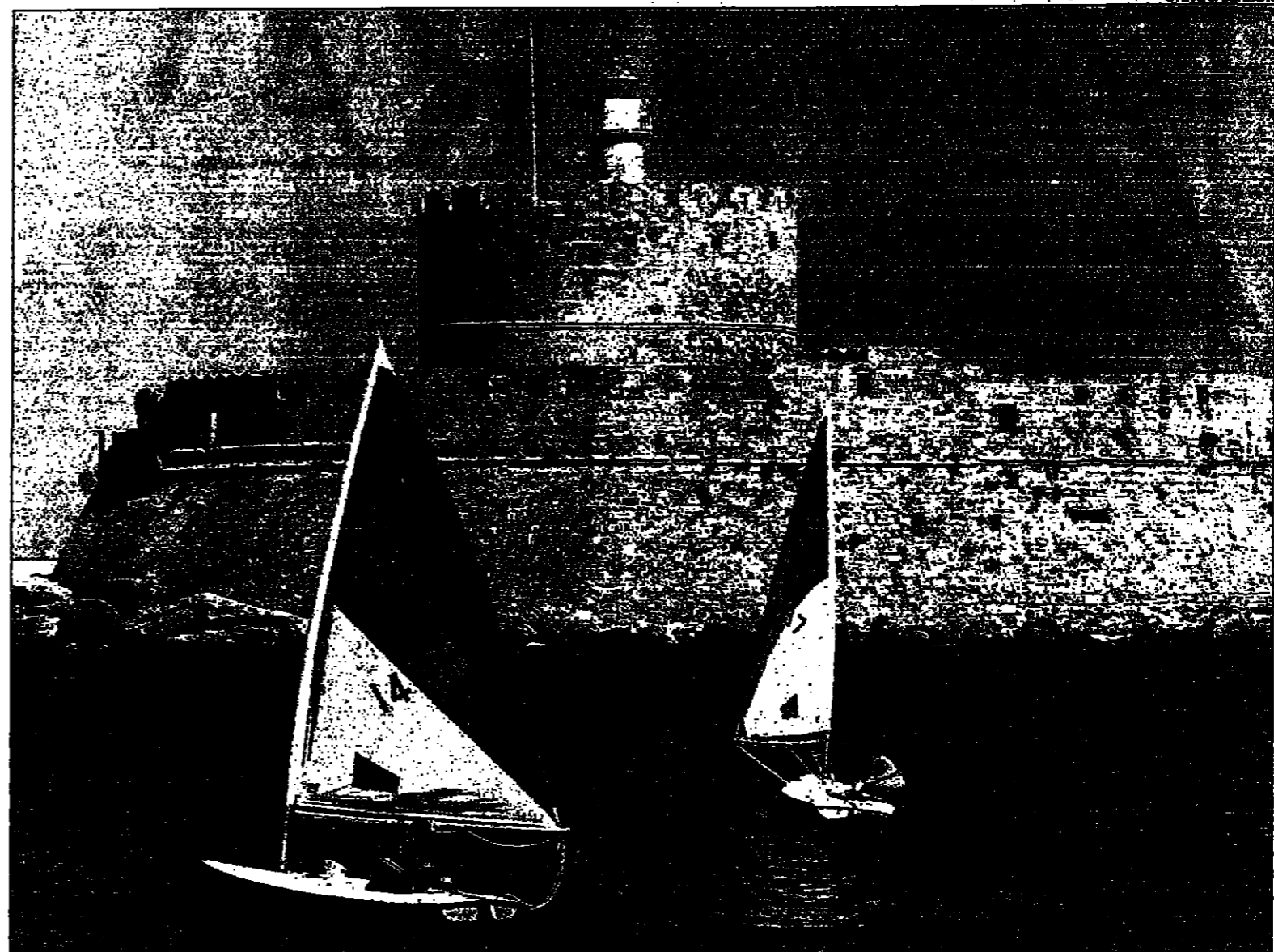
**F**ar from the deserted coves there is another Mediterranean of glitz and glamour.

epitomised by the gin palaces moored stern-to in Portofino and Antibes. Crestar Yachts (0171-730 9962) arranges charters on anything from "quite modest 60ft-70ft sailing boats to the world's mega-yachts". The 131ft sloop *Philanderer* (up to ten guests, six crew, satellite communications and recreational equipment, in the eastern Mediterranean), will carry you in wonderful luxury for a shade more than £36,000 a week.

If you need something nippier, you and nine others could charter the motor yacht *Ocotopus* from Camper & Nicholson's (0171-491 2950) at about £49,000 a week. One possible drawback: she does not have a helipad.

**CULTURAL CRUISING**

**I**f anyone can be said to challenge the melancholy truth that travel usually fails to broaden the mind, it is Swan Hellenic (0171-800 2200). The 300 passengers on the "Islands in the Sun" cruise aboard the *Minerva* (eight days, Naples to Piraeus, August 19-26) are offered excursions to see the Riace bronzes in Reggio Calabria, the ancient Greek theatre at Taormina, the Byzantine monastery complex at Osios Loukas and the National Archaeology Museum in Athens. The ship



Sails in the sea breeze: it is easier to learn to handle a Laser in the warm shelter of Rhodes Town harbour than in cold UK waters

has a professional photographer and offers lectures by historians on classical Rome and Greece and Renaissance art and by a marine biologist on marine conservation.

This cruise segues neatly into "The Wine-Dark Sea", an eight-day meander about the Aegean (Aug 26-Sept 2), ending at Kusadasi (excursion to the ruins at Ephesus). Prices per person for each cruise from £1,560 to £3,205 (under-25s half-price) and include air travel from the UK, taxes, full board, excursions and tips.

**LUXURY CRUISING**

**T**his is the first year for P&O's (0171-800 2222) cruise ship *Arcadia*. Formerly the *Star Princess*, she was built in 1989, carries 1,461 passengers and boasts the



(prices fall as the group increases to 16, when per person costs are £570-£750), including flights and full board. Other companies include: Top Yacht (01753 646636), Daydreams (0171-637 8921) and the imaginative Traveller (0181-742 8612). (See Joe Roberts, opposite.)

**FLOATING PARTY**

**S**ingle travellers may enjoy the "floating house parties" operated by Daydreams Travel (0171-637 8921) on its well-appointed and crewed 82-foot schooner *Cevri Hasan III* (maximum 12 passengers). Itineraries (not in August) combine sailing along Turkey's Aegean and Mediterranean coast with optional inland excursions, and cost £385 per person for one week in June (£599 in July). This includes meals and transfer to/from Güllük airport (one hour from Bodrum) and excudes flights, bar bills, tips.

Seafarer (0171-234 0500) has singles-only Greek island-hopping cruises on its 154-foot motor sailer Zeus III; seven nights, departing Athens on August 7 and 14, visiting Naxos, Santorini, Ios, Paros, Delos, Mykonos and Tinos, cost from £639 (£935 depending on cabin type), including flights and full board.

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**F**or the British dinghy sailor, hardened by strong seas, tides and winds, a holiday on the Mediterranean is seductive. You work on your tan until the sea breeze starts up. Then you saunter down to the beach where the machines wait, rigged and raring to go. You step on some sunblock, step aboard the craft of your choice and hurdle across the bay. There is no guilt, either, for back on the beach, children

Continued on page 27



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I shouldn't have been surprised. Every crew member seemed to go out of their way to make our cruise that little more special.

The atmosphere was — well — intimate. We're already planning another trip with NCL next year.

Meanwhile, I've got some serious cooking to do to help pass the time.





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SUMMER SUN 1998: HOLIDAYS ON WATER



Flotilla boats moored in Majorca cruise the Balearics

From page 26 and non-sailing partners are being gently introduced to sailing by qualified instructors. Veteran's tip: take full-finger sailing gloves with you. Minores Sailing (0181-948 2106) operates holidays in the bay of Fornells. Minores. Cost per person for 14 nights (four sharing a two-bedroom apartment), £805 (departure May 22, half-term), £940 (June 26), £1,183 (Jul-Aug peak), includes flights, transfers, tuition and use of boats. For similar holidays in Greece and Turkey, try Sunworld Sailing (01273 626284) and Sunsail (01705 222222).

CANAL CRUISING

One way to dip your keel in salt water is to cruise the canals of southern France. The Canal du Midi and the Canal du Rhône à Sète meet in the saline lagoons of the Camargue. Cruise from Beaucaire on the Rhône via the Etang de Thau (for bird-watchers and shellfish-eaters) to Carcassonne and beyond. European Waterways (01784 482439) operates the crewed, ten-passenger barge Anjodi with gastronomy, wine-tasting and excursions to Narbonne and Béziers: a double cabin in July/August costs £1,097-£1,347 per person (make your own travel arrangements). Crown Blue Line (01603 630513) and Hoseasons (01502 500555) offer self-skipped cruising on both canals. A four-berth Buccaneer cruiser from CBL costs from £790 (May) to £990 (peak season), including canal tolls. This does not include fuel, one-way supplements, insurance and travel to and from your starting point.

DIVING

For the most intense experience of the Mediterranean you have to get under the

water. The Maltese archipelago offers dramatic submarine features, caves and habitats for things with fins. Veteran's tip: always consult local divers first. Aquatours (0181-255 8030) has diving holidays at Marsalforn on Gozo, with courses approved by BS-AC (British Sub-Aqua Club) and PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors). Seven nights (based on four sharing a two-bedroom apartment) cost per person from £327 (May and June) to £366 (July 10-Sep 6), including flights and helicopter transfers. A five-day beginner's PADI open-water course costs £225 including all tuition, equipment and certificates. Lists of approved diving schools from BS-AC (0151-350 6200) and PADI (0117-971 1717). Other operators include: Action Vacances (0161-442 6130) at Nolon, near Marseilles; Club Med (01455 852202) at Cadaqués, Catalonia and Santa Teresa, Sardinia.

LA JEUNESSE

Those embarrassed by having to holiday with their parents might prefer PGL (01989 768768), which specialises in activity holidays for six-to-18-year-olds. It offers a one-week, two-centre holiday which begins with a three-day descent of the River Ardèche by canoe (see Paul Hoggart, p28) and finishes with sailing, windsurfing and wave-skiing on the Languedoc Mediterranean coast; aimed at 12-18s, who must be able to swim 50 metres, it costs £359 per person including return coach from UK. PGL also runs life-guard training and watersports holidays near Cap d'Agde (same price). Sunworld Sailing (01273 626284) has introduced Hot Shots sailing clubs for eight to 13s to run alongside its Sea Urchins (two to five) and Surfboosters (five to 13) clubs in Spain, Greece, and Turkey.



View from the masthead: a windsurfer passes a yacht on a calm stretch of sea among the Greek islands

Other firms include Club Med (01455 852202), Sunsail (01705 222222), Mark Warner (0171-393 3131) and the Peligoni Club (01243 511499) on Zakynthos.

WINDSURFING

You can learn to windsurf almost anywhere and, being warm, the Mediterranean is ideal. But experienced windsurfers want more reliable winds and waves and that's what you get at Tarifa.

Situated at the southernmost tip of Spain, where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic, Tarifa has ocean swell and strong currents off-shore, plus cross-shore prevailing winds, force 4-7, which are accelerated by the high ground inland — not for beginners. Sportif (01273 844919) has one-week packages to Tarifa in May for about £436 (high season about £502) per person, B&B, including flights but not transfers or board/rig hire.

It's all going swimmingly

Time slows down when you cruise the coast of southwest Turkey in a gulet. The ranges of the Taurus mountains shimmer like a mirage and sometimes sea and sky merge into a blue haze and you are lulled by the swaying of the boat. There is no hurry.

You can stop whenever you want to, drop anchor and jump over the side. Swimming from a boat is quite different to swimming from a beach; the deeper water cradles you, the exercise seems more playful than strenuous.

Our gulet was well-equipped with snorkels, masks and flippers, rafts, water skis and a jet ski. But whenever we anchored close to land, I liked to snorkel along the shore. The only fish were sardines no bigger than insects.

We arrived at the bay of Ucagiz, in the centre of the Kekova region, where there are underwater ruins. All along the edge of the island of Kekova we spotted architectural details among the olive trees — crumbling stairways, collapsed walls and doorways full of brambles slipping gracefully towards the sea.

Below the water, other buildings are discernible; the largest is either a boatyard or a Byzantine church — it depends on your guide. This coastline once guarded the proudly independent kingdom of Lycia, which flourished in the millennium before Christ.

The small fishing village of Kale, just across the bay from Kekova, was once the ancient city of Simena. It is an attractive, slightly ramshackle place, its whitewashed houses cascading down the steep hill from the ruined medieval fortress. Women wearing headscarves and high-waisted pantaloons sell postcards and glasses of cherry juice.

We climbed through the village, stopping to look at the small theatre that nestles under the fortress walls. There was once a temple to

Poseidon on the peninsula, but it was dismantled to build a fortress. The holiday village of Kalkan, west of Kekova, stands at the foot of a steep mountain. Its popularity predates the upsurge of tourism to Turkey — the elite of Istanbul have been going there for nearly a century. There is no beach at Kalkan, which limits its appeal to those without guilets but is also its salvation. The resort hovers on the brink of over-development but manages to retain its charm and character. How long this will last is anybody's guess.

After so much being on land it was time to return to our floating hotel. The food aboard our gulet, prepared by the crew, was simple, fresh and plentiful. Each meal had the charm of a picnic, and the sea air sharpened our appetites.

Late at night, when both the sky and the water had turned a deep indigo, we swam again, floating on our backs, looking up at the stars. Then we retired to our cabins and slept like children, rocked by the waves.

JOE ROBERTS

Joe Roberts travelled with Tapestry Holidays (0181-742 0053), which arranges full-board gulet cruises out of Kalkan from May to October. A two-day mini-cruise starts at £120 per person from May to July 11; three-day mini-cruises start from £150 for the same period. A week costs £460 per person from May 31 to July 11; increasing to £580 in late August. The one-week packages include flights from Gatwick.



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SUMMER SUN 1998: HOLIDAYS ON WATER



# Naked cheer on a French riverbank

Paul Hoggart takes his sons down the Ardèche in a canoe and finds that capsizing is a whole lot more fun when your rescuer is nude

**W**e lost control at the foot of the rapid. As the front of our Canadian two-man canoe hit smooth water, the back swung out wildly from the foaming rocks, and we pirouetted like a drunken ballerina, paddles flapping vainly. Suddenly, unseen hands gripped our boat and we were back on course. At the huge hairpin loop called the Cirque de la Madeleine, the Ardèche passes through a naturist colony. Naked people lined the bottom of the gorge, lolling in the river or basking on the hot rocks like big pink lizards. I was, nevertheless, a little startled to look up from our private spurny confusion to find a naked young woman thigh-deep in the cool, green water, pulling our boat straight. "Voilà," she chirruped. I felt overdressed in my chunky buoyancy-aid and crash-helmet. "Merdi" we called. "Bonjour," trilled two naked nymphs lounging in the deep pool before the next chute. Evidently we had tumbled into a William Ety canvas. But this is just one of many diversions you may enjoy if you paddle the gorge from Vallon-Pont-d'Arc to St Mar-

**ARDECHE FACT FILE**

- Paul Hoggart travelled with PGL (01989 766768), which organises nine-night holidays (two nights spent on the coach) for 12-18 year olds during the summer school holidays. The package includes three/four days canoeing from Vallon Pont d'Arc to St Martin. The remainder of the week is spent enjoying watersports on the Mediterranean.
- Participants must be able to swim 50 metres. Pick-up points are Manchester, Birmingham, London and Dover. The price of a week's holiday is £359 throughout the season, including full board and qualified instruction.
- Headwater (01606 813333) offers family canoeing holidays in the Dordogne, on the Cher in the Loire Valley and on the Creuse, between May and October. None of these waterways are arduous; the company offers basic instruction at the start of the holiday and arranges hotel accommodation en route (and also transports your luggage between hotels). Canoeing takes place every other day.
- Self-drive package prices on the Creuse start at £379 per person in May (rising to £467) on the Cher, £389 (£467) and in the Dordogne, £397 (£489). Prices are on a half-board basis. Flights can be arranged for a supplement.
- Eurocamp (01565 626262) has three campsites on the Ardèche. Prices at Soteld Vivarais start at £283, rising to £559, for a family of six in tent accommodation for two weeks. Canoe hire is arranged locally and trips are not escorted.

tin, where the river trundles off to join the Rhône. Between these villages, the Ardèche has cut what is possibly the most dramatic canyon in Europe. Bleached 1,000 ft high cliffs carved from the ancient limestone plateau loom over the river. It twists like a side-winder, depositing shingle beaches at intervals. Every hundred yards or so the water hits rock and races over not-too-dangerous rapids, as though the gorge were designed by nature for the enter-

tainment of inexperienced canoeists. We were on a PGL Family Adventure holiday, staying at a large campsite and "doing" the gorge over a week. This entailed a training day and three days on the river, with two days off. We began gently enough, training in the calm water above the gorge. This involved the basic techniques, including the "J" stroke, vital to adults sharing the paddling with young children, as it lets a stronger rear paddler keep the canoe straight. We learnt the rules of the road, what to do if you capsize, and how to empty a water-logged boat. The most important procedure is for dealing with waggish swimmers who try to tip you over, a common hazard apparently. You shout "Get off!" and thwack them with your paddles. In practice the instructors are so safety-conscious that, although everyone except the instructors capsized at least once during the week, it was hard to imagine a serious mishap. At each rapid we pulled up at the nearest beach, or huddled in a cluster mid-stream, gripping each other's boats, while they showed us exactly how to go down. The Ardèche presents little challenge to serious canoeists but it is busy, and so many people go down without training or supervision, that accidents are inevitable. If unprotected heads hit rock, these can be fatal. When we went, in mid-July, there had already been ten deaths that season.

Each rapid has a name: "Air-France" (where the French go flying), "British Airways" (where the Brits do likewise) or "The Can-Opener". As we surveyed the route down "Air France", a Frenchwoman in a kayak, wearing only bikini briefs, missed the chute and flew off in a flurry of bubbles, to be rescued by our tutoring instructors. The biggest and frothiest chute is the Pas du Mousse. Here a photographer sits on a convenient promontory, snapping away like the automatic camera on a rollercoaster. As you drive back to Vallon that evening your picture is displayed on a board by the road. The most "technical" rapid is the Charlemagne, just before you reach the Pont D'Arc. Here the stream splits into several channels, and you have to do a little slalom to hit the right one at the right angle and get down it upright. Many canoes capsize here and the outcrops are crowded with sunbathers enjoying the floorshow. Thieving snorkellers lurk in the water to "salvage" the valuables of those unfortunate enough to capsize. It is like canoeing



Above left, the group tries "wombing" down the gentler rapids. Above, the dramatic gorge carved by the Ardèche

through a colony of Cornish wreckers. (Always keep valuables attached to your person in a waterproof container.) We managed a perfect descent and I was feeling fairly smug until a middle-aged jay-floater on an airbed drifted under our bows and we shoved her unceremoniously on to the next beach. At 59 by 39 metres, the Pont D'Arc itself is one of the largest natural rock arches in the world. It was formed when the river forced a short-cut through an underground stream at a particularly sharp loop and has left a deep fertile crescent on the original bed. There is a rough path to the top where you can sit on the narrow tussocked ridge and enjoy a bird's-eye view of the bend in the river, teeming with boats and sunbathers. Our trip down river was studded with extra diversions and entertainments. We had long, leisurely picnics, swimming in the jade-green water (buoyancy-aids compulsory) while the smaller children played with the schools of froglets which hopped about the river's edge. We filled our bottles from a spring splashing into the river, steered our canoes through a looping cave with a narrow exit, passed through the limpid water under the huge ledge to shout "echo corner" — and we went "wombing". To do this, swimmers don a second buoyancy-aid like a nappy, then form a human chain in the river, each in a sitting position with legs



Paul Hoggart, with sons Matthew (front) and Edward, canoe the Ardèche

splayed and gripping the back of the person in front. Thus arranged, you dabble down one of the gentler rapids like an over-sized water-snake. It is tremendous fun. Each day seemed to end near a bar, hidden in the scrubby deciduous woods that cling to the gorge. After all the heat and exertion, the beers did not touch the sides. Our final day was spent at an activity centre on the river. Here we chose two activities each, from abseiling, kayaking and a walk along the gorge. All were well-organised and enjoyable. PGL specialises in activity holidays for children, and its success owes much to the joviality of the instructors (as well as their competence). Few concessions were made to adult gravitas.

and we were treated to an uninterrupted stream of jokes and wheezes. Most were devised by our group leader, a tall bronzed youth named Jan with a blonde crew-cut and a Tin-Tin quiff. He began with a geological account of the gorge which, he explained, is circular. A British engineer named Harry Willis had blasted it out of the plateau, installing huge pumps to raise the river back to its starting point at night. This was delivered with such unwavering po-faced authority that parents felt unable to voice their private doubts. Some were happily convinced. "Harry Willis" was our official rallying cry. We observed a

minute's silence by a cross on a cliff where he died, said Jan, in a mis-timed blast. Sadly, PGL has discontinued its family holidays, but it still organises trips for children. It seemed to err on the side of safety, and quite right too, but there are many small canoe-hire firms around Vallon which seem positively blasé and provide minimal training. Novices should approach with caution. Canoeists are expected to do the descent in a day, which means six to nine hours on the river, depending on conditions. It was a tiring week for someone as unfit as myself but canoeing is superb for your upper-body strength, and I felt much better for it. Above all, it is an entertaining way of enjoying majestic scenery.

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مكتبة السفر

SKI WEEKEND: SAFETY ON THE SLOPES

# How common sense can save lives



Michael Kennedy: died playing ski football

Doug Sager and Steve Keenan

examine ski safety standards and ask if skiers should be wearing helmets

The deaths of two high-profile US celebrities in skiing accidents have fuelled debate on whether skiers should be forced to wear helmets for their own protection.

Sonny Bono, pop star turned Republican congressman, died in Heavenly Valley, California on Tuesday, six days after Michael Kennedy, son of the late senator Robert Kennedy. Both died after colliding with trees.

In another publicised accident, Formula One champion Jacques Villeneuve was concussed in a skiing accident in France on New Year's Eve.

And the Royals' recent appearance on the slopes at Klosters has prompted reminders that March 12 will mark the tenth anniversary of the death of Major Hugh Lindsay, caught by an avalanche in Switzerland while skiing with Prince Charles and his party.

Mr Kennedy was killed in Aspen, Colorado — a state where nine skiers died in collisions with trees last winter. In another incident, a 33-year-old British beginner died of head injuries when an American ski-lift operator crashed into him at Vail.

Although it is not yet obligatory for skiers to wear helmets, the arguments in favour of the practice are gaining ground. And the impetus is coming not from the safety-first brigade, but from extreme skiers.

For the first time, a product review of helmets for hardcore skiers has appeared in an American magazine, *Powder*. Gill Williams, editor of UK magazine *Ski & Board*, said: "Most people in the industry believe helmets are the logical way to go forward."

But there is European resistance to the American initiative. David Hearn, of the Ski Club of Great Britain, said: "Helmets have been touted and certainly for children up to 16, we would support this practice. But for adults, it is a personal choice."



The safety of skiers is in the spotlight this week after several high-profile accidents which test emergency response teams, such as this one, seen here on a rescue in the Alps



A Royal skiing trip ten years ago ended in tragedy

While that appeared to be a dear-cut accident, Mr Kennedy died while playing a game of ski football, despite having been warned of the dangers by Aspen ski patrols. "It is not yet known whether a helmet might have helped Mr Bono, who was alone on an intermediate ski slope when he crossed beneath a chairlift and struck a tree. Added Britain's best-ever downhill racer, Konrad Bartelski: "No law can stop people from doing silly things. But if it comes to legislating on helmets, you will find me skiing where it is not compulsory to wear them."

Using a snow-packed water bottle as a football, he reached out for a pass, caught the bottle but slammed head first into a tree, suffering massive injuries.

To put skiing accidents in perspective, a nine-year study of accidents in America concluded that the average holiday skier, skiing one week per year, would have to ski for 55 years before suffering any injury.

The survey, published in the *Western Journal of Medicine* in April 1996, also found that knee injuries accounted for one-third of all accidents. Head injuries accounted for less than nine per cent.

It is ironic that this season's most publicised fatalities should both have occurred in America, where safety standards are far more stringent than in the Alps.

America is the land of rigorously enforced "slow skiing" zones, padded lift pylons, immaculately groomed pistes, well-staffed rescue squads — and, most importantly, skiers

who obey guidelines from the FIS (International Ski Federation), skiing's governing body, about not stopping in the middle of the piste or skiing out of control.

Intersections are monitored, and anyone foolhardy enough to duck under an American warning rope is chased down — and almost always caught — by the safety patrol.

Indeed, American ski magazines encourage their more adventurous readers to abandon America for Europe,

where the absence of piste police, a lack of "closed areas" and a laissez faire attitude allow daredevil skiers a latitude that would land them in jail in America.

Already this season in the French and Swiss Alps, *Times* ski correspondent Doug Sager has watched a ski teacher lead a ten-year-old client under two separate warning barriers into an officially closed off-piste area. Three of her colleagues conducted beginner classes smack in the middle of a

highly congested and narrow piste. He saw skiers busily hacking their way through two-metre high rubber netting with knives, to reach an area specifically closed off because other skiers had died there.

Up on a glacier, he observed dozens of skiers ducking under flimsy ropes marking crevasse danger zones, with the resort safety personnel simply looking on.

The wonder is not that so many fatal accidents occur, but that so many do not.



Sonny Bono: collided with a tree on the slopes

### SKI SAFETY

The most important, and misunderstood, FIS rule states that skiers further down the hill have priority. This means that no matter how odd the manoeuvre of the skier in front, it is your responsibility to avoid him or her.

This winter has been one of the worst early snowfall seasons on record in the Alps. In France, Austria and Switzerland, the majority of resorts are still not fully open. Jagged rocks are covered with only a thin layer of snow off piste, and broken limbs and fatal head injuries are far more common when snow cover is scant.

It is important that snowboarding and off-piste skiing are included in the cover — along with personal liability insurance should you collide with another skier. Inter Assurance (01253 74774) charges £46.10 for 17 days worldwide, including these categories plus £10 million medical cover.

Frontier Ski, which uses Hamilton Barr insurance (01483 426600), charges £65, which includes P11, £5 million cover and £600 towards physio bills on return.

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HEALTH SPAS: A WEEKEND GUIDE

I was lying in Jacques Chirac's bath. The President of France had departed three weeks earlier, but it was still an important moment: my first treatment on my first visit to a spa. I lay in a tub of warm sea water while a massage therapist sprayed me with a high-pressure jet. "If you're not feeling friendly when you get here," croons Ana Bernardino, "you will when you leave."

I'll have an early bath Jim Keeble tries thalassotherapy

Hotel Vilalara, on the Algarve coast, is one of Europe's top thalassotherapy centres (hence the patronage of frèrre Jacques). A 50-minute drive west of Faro airport, it is the kind of resort that gives luxury a good name. Extremely private, gardens crowded with flowers and palm trees, five swimming pools (two salt water), spacious rooms and lots of bathrubs. Baths are to Vilalara. I quickly realise what vodka is to Moscow.

interview. About one person in 20 should not take the treatments because of heart or circulatory problems, or because of medication. Despite five cups of espresso for breakfast I passed the blood pressure test and was given a plastic bathing cap.

The spa is my vision of heaven. There are white lights, white tiled floor and walls. Everyone wears white dressing gowns and white slippers. We sit in white waiting rooms in white chairs waiting for white-suited Portuguese women to lead us to another part of paradise. "Mr Keeble, it's time to meet your maker."

After Ana Bernardino, I was put in the big exercise pool where I was the youngest in a group of four women and three men over 50. But water is a great leveller and we all splashed around like five-year-olds.

Next was a "pediluve" (a treatment against heavy legs) - putting your feet in hot and then cold bubbling water. Before lunch, I dragged my lighter legs back into a smaller pool for more water-jet massage. "It feels so good," coos Martina from Düsseldorf, who had lost

Jim Keeble tries to pinch the hotel dressing gown

seven kilos in two weeks. "I have my power back."

The claims for thalassotherapy are as widespread (and sometimes as believable) as Elvis sightings. Arthritis, asthma, acne and even infertility sufferers are said to benefit from sea water. The centre claims an 80 per cent success rate with its "anti-tobacco" cures, which use acupuncture, aerosol sprays and exercise. But as Dr Gabarel, the chief physician, says, "It's difficult to say whether the environment or the treatments are more influential."

After lunch it was back to arduous relaxation. The bain multi-jet is a nuclear-powered whirlpool bath in which every 30 seconds water jets come on to surprise dormant body parts, leaving me feeling like a pair of socks on a spin cycle. Which is nothing compared to how I felt after douche pression - a high-powered jet hose of which Wormwood Scrubs would be proud.

By the end of my first day I felt as relaxed as Bill Gates's bank manager. My room was the smallest in the resort and still huge. The bed was as large as the Isle of Wight, only more comfortable. After another excellent meal (soup, shrimps, roast beef) I fell asleep in my clothes.

I began day two with a facial. "It is necessary," says Ignacia, staring at my nose. An hour later I had been scrubbed, muddled and kneaded into a semblance of respectability. "Better," concludes Ignacia.

Outside, the sun was pouring down. Inside, I was massaged, blasted again with hot water-jets and plunked in a bubbling bath brimming with seaweed. The afternoon ended with shiatsu from Castro, who made Everest seem small. Yet his touch was fine, and I floated down the corridor humming to myself.

As the sun is swallowed by the Atlantic, waves hushing on to the beach, I sip a beer and reflect that Ana Bernardino was quite right - I do feel extremely friendly.

Jim Keeble travelled with Thermalia Travel (0171-453 1898). One week's full board at Hotel Vilalara, return flight with Air Portugal and six days of treatments cost from £1,185 per person based on two sharing. "Stop smoking" programme, £100.



Guests at the Corinthia Palace Hotel spa can expect to be pampered halfway to paradise in free-standing tubs surrounded by flowers and incense

Heaven-scent tonics for

Some people don't like this. Todd warned me as he embarked on my trigger point massage, which is particularly "deep" (for deep, read hard). He put all his weight on the centre of my muscles, supposedly to push out the tension but really, I suspect, to punish me for my hitherto slob-like state.

Through this refined form of masochism, Todd discovered that my left hip was sloping, apparently due to bad posture, which could lead to backache. To demonstrate his point, he pulled my hands above my head and showed me that one arm was at least a centimetre longer than the other.

Then, pulling me in all directions so that my back made a series of satisfying clicking noises, and manoeuvring my head as though I was a dancer in a Michael Jackson

Joanna Hunter cheerfully submits to industrial-strength massage, followed by a Maltese mudslinging session

video. Todd began sorting me out. Amazingly, when he put my palms together again there was only the smallest difference. Forget plastic surgery, I thought, if I could be straightened out in an hour I might be on the Paris catwalk after a week.

The Athenaeum at the Corinthia Palace Hotel, Malta, may be the closest I will ever get to paradise. Run by Werner Hammerich, who believes in a holistic and individual approach to health, the centre offers everything the jaded of body and mind could wish for: a pool, jacuzzi, a beautiful sauna garden complete with steam, Finnish and hellishly hot saunas, squash and tennis courts and countless treat-



Sheer bliss: floral treatment

ments, from facials to oxygen therapy.

Hammerich also emphasises the medical side to the Athenaeum: many of the treatments, such as sports therapy, are used in conjunction with prescribed medication.

The spa's real strength is its staff, who radiate health, serenity and kindness, and whose attention to detail is remarkable. Pat Vella, Hammerich's assistant, proudly showed me numerous thank-you letters and spoke fondly of her clients.

"I love my work, it's my baby," she beamed. They are also diplomats, referring coyly to any blemishes or cellulite that I "might have" with straight faces.

I have always had a sneaking suspicion that, despite those inexpressible, recurring ailments that somehow always keep me from the gym, deep down a Lara Croft look-alike is just waiting to get out. The staff were so kind and

encouraging that they almost convinced me that they believed it too.

The majority of the guests are local residents, who have bought membership of the spa, or German and British holidaymakers. Former visitors include Anthony Turner and Prince Albert of Monaco.

Herr and Frau Schaper, who live on their own island off the north coast of Germany, have spent a month in a spa each year since 1979. They voted the Athenaeum their favourite so far, although they were a little disappointed by the Corinthia Palace Hotel, which they felt did not quite merit five-star status.

"We chose the Athenaeum because of the personal attention - we were able to phone Mr Hammerich beforehand and discuss what was best for us," said Frau Schaper, who

Continued on page 31

Lunn Poly advertisement for Caribbean cruises. Features a map of the Caribbean, a cruise ship, and text: 'UP TO 33% OFF DAWN PRINCESS CARIBBEAN CRUISES'. Includes details about the Dawn Princess Winter 1998/9 brochure and contact information for Lunn Poly.

Odyssey advertisement for Indian Ocean cruises. Features a map of the Indian Ocean, a cruise ship, and text: 'INDIAN OCEAN Odyssey EXPLORE THE ISLANDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ABOARD THE MS ROYAL STAR 1st to 22nd March 1998'. Includes details about the itinerary and contact information for Noble Caledonia Limited.

Handwritten Arabic text: 'مكتبة القرآن' (Library of the Quran)

HEALTH SPAS: A WEEKEND GUIDE



Another dressing gown: as worn in all the best spas

FACT FILE

■ Joanna Hunter travelled with Erna Low (0171-584 2841) and stayed at the Corinthia Palace Hotel. Erna Low is offering seven nights' half-board with an Anti-Stress programme including constitution, four aromatherapy massages, three Reiki treatments, three Rasul showers, four aquarobics classes, three multiple-sensory oxygen vitalisation sessions and use of the facilities, from £324 per person, based on two sharing. Flights not included.

■ Joanna Hunter flew with British Airways (0345 22211) to Malta, a service operated by GB Airways. It flies from Gatwick to Malta International Airport five times a week until the end of March daily throughout the summer. Until January 23, return flights, not including tax, cost from £139 per person.

■ Best time to go: A visit to the Athenaeum is cheapest during July and August.

■ Further reading: *Flight Guide to Malta*, £13.95; *Benitz Guide to Malta*, £4.95; *Malta and Gozo Blue Guide*, £9.99.

■ Further information: Malta Tourist Office (0171-292 4900).

Glowing testimony to Thai break

Pounded, pummelled and smeared in yoghurt, Jo Foley still comes up smelling of roses

FACT FILE

■ Elegant Resorts (01244 897888) offers seven nights at the Banyan Tree Phuket, on a room-only basis but including return flights via Bangkok from £1,560, rising to £1,545 between October and January (unless stated otherwise prices are per person, based on two sharing a room, accommodation only). It also offers seven nights' room-only at Bintan's Banyan Tree, which includes return flights to Singapore and the 45-minute catamaran ride to Bintan Island, from £1,580. All treatments should be booked at least a day in advance (you may also book them through Elegant Resorts).

■ The Oriental Spa, Bangkok: British Airways (0345 22211) flies daily to Bangkok and flights start at £670 return excluding tax. A two-night programme. The Oriental Spa Experience costs from £398 per person and includes limousine airport transfers, spa cuisine meals and up to ten treatments including a jet lag massage, a marine balneotherapy treatment, an oriental foot massage and facial. Details: 0810 96267.

■ Seasons in Style (0151-342 0505), a new upmarket tour operator, offers a seven-night stay on a room-only basis at the Four Seasons Resort Bali at Jimbaran Bay from £1,853 — this includes return flights on Qantas from London. Treatments at the Spa are from around £30 for a 75-minute facial to £50 for the royal tuck.

■ Jo Foley was a guest of Chiva-Som (0171-584 5018), which can be booked through British Airways Holidays Premium Collection (01293 723350), Thermania Travel (0171-586 7725), Tropical Locations (0181-427 2308) and Silkent Travel (0181-875 9090). All can tailor-make inclusive holidays featuring Chiva-Som, or can incorporate the resort into a Far East itinerary. A typical five-night stay with British Airways Holidays, including ocean-view accommodation, all meals, health, beauty and fitness consultations and choice of daily massage, costs from £1,430 per person. This includes scheduled flights and internal transfers.

■ When to go: the best time to visit Bangkok is between November and March — the monsoon finishes in October and humidity escalates from April. Temperatures in Bali and Bintan are a steady 29-32C; both best avoided during the height of the rainy season (Oct-Nov). Rainy season at Phuket lasts from May to October.

■ Red tape: Holders of UK passports do not need visas for Singapore, Thailand (unless staying more than 30 days) or Indonesia.

■ Health: no compulsory vaccinations for Thailand, Indonesia or Singapore but travellers are advised to consult their GP about precautions against malaria, tetanus, polio, typhoid and hepatitis.

■ Further information: Thailand tourist information 0839 300800 (premium rates); Indonesia tourist information 0171-495 0030.



Balancing act: real Thai massage benefits both spirit and body

The sensation of a woman I had only just met soaping my body in a bath covered with rose petals was, to say the least, strange. In the event, I put aside my natural modesty along with my Irish Catholic upbringing and decided to lie back and enjoy it. After all, she had already massaged every bit of me, tortured my toes, covered me with a herbal paste, buffed it off with the heel of her hand, slapped live yoghurt on my willing frame and hosed me down.

I was experiencing a "royal lulur" treatment — two hours of indulgence — in the spa of the Four Seasons Hotel in Bali. While I recovered my composure, my therapist offered me a choice of three drinks — I opted for a muddy mixture marked rejuvenation.

Whatever the cause — the drink, the treatment or both — I emerged relaxed and almost glowing.

One of the joys in travelling through southeast Asia is its spas — no self-respecting hotel is without one. There is no better way to cope with jet lag, or to straighten out a body sitting for too long on a plane, than a serious massage. And no other part of the globe has better therapists or a wider choice of massages.

These spas also offer treatment programmes that can last from one and a half hours to a whole day. A leading spa chain is the Banyan Tree group, which can pamper bodies and soothe minds from Bangkok to Bintan, and from the Maldives to its flagship establishment, the Laguna Phuket Resort in Phuket.

In the Resort's four beautiful pavilions, you can indulge in a "Path to Inner Peace": a package that includes a Swedish massage, an "Essence of Earth" massage (using local spices and plants), a back treatment, a mud body cleanser and a Thai honey facial, all for about £110.

Or you may prefer an "Oasis of Bliss": a sauna, a body-stimulating polish, an Indonesian massage, and an elixir to balance yin and yang, all packed into 95 minutes and costing less than £40.

If you need to be jolted back to reality, visit a village or beach for a massage — at a tenth of the price charged by pleasure palaces. For £5, an old croone with a plastic bottle of evil-smelling oil will give you the most invigorating massage of your life, or a gentle Thai girl, using her whole body, will turn you upside down to release all your blocked energies.

These treatments are effective — after all, they are highly esteemed in southeast Asian cultures — but you are not surrounded with orchids and the softest towels, as you are at the Banyan Tree's newest complex at Bintan.

Here, high on stilts on the edge of the South China Sea, and only a 45-minute catamaran journey from Singapore's Tanah Merah ferry terminal, you can watch ships and inquisitive monkeys during your treatments. The same therapies await visitors to the 51st floor of Thailand's tallest building, the 60-storey Thai Wah Tower in Bangkok: here, in the garden spa of the Westin Banyan Tree, you appear to float over the city from a black marble bath.

It is in this city that the modern spa revival began five years ago, at the Oriental Hotel. Across the Chao Phraya river from the hotel, this is a temple to well-being and serenity. When waiting for my massage to begin, I looked up to see the masseur in prayer — probably the only time a man has ever prayed before touching my body. A true Thai massage is as much for the spirit as the body — it lasted almost two hours, and was the best I have ever had.

body and soul

Continued from page 30

wanted to lose a stone in a month on a diet of fruit, vegetables and lots of sleep. Most people's favourite treatment seemed to be the aroma bath, which is rather like sitting in a large cup of tea with the bag left in it. The Alpine herbs and essential oils are said to stimulate blood circulation and metabolism: it is also wonderfully relaxing. The bathroom, with four freestanding tubs, is an oasis of calm surrounded by candles and flowers.

My favourite treatment, the Rasul shower, is supposed to have originated in the harems of Turkey to calm the Sultan's consorts. In a small room with built-in showers, scented with incense and lit by candles, you can fling mud around to your heart's content. After showering, you cover yourself in three kinds of mud with extra salts and minerals. Another shower cleans you up, and finally the mud is followed with a mixed oil. Apparently the Rasul shower improves the skin's connective tissue and the metabolism: either way, my skin has never felt so soft, even soothing my eczema. Less enjoyable, but extremely satisfactory, were the oxygen treatments. Oxygen was

extracted from the air by a huge machine and pumped into my plastic mask. Then there was a choice of relaxing in a chair for 45 minutes, or pedalling on an exercise bike.

The body is able to absorb oxygen more effectively when exercising, and — joy of joys — it helps you lose weight. Small clips attached to my ears monitored my pulse rate, which was displayed on a screen on the bike's handlebars. Through some complicated mathematics involving my height, weight and age, the computer could tell how many calories I was burning. After 30 minutes I was sweaty, but not tired. I was also extremely pleased with myself: I had burnt off 162 calories.

A whiff of the New Age hangs around the Athenaeum, but only the aura photo pushed my credulity too far. Energy from the hands is transferred through plastic pads to a heat-sensitive camera, producing a photo supposed to convey your state of mind.

I was shown a sample picture in which a woman, smiling serenely, had a red light all over her face. "This shows she has fantastic energy. It could be positive, or it could mean she's planning to kill her husband," said Pat. My hands suddenly became hot and clammy, treacherous-

ly condemning me to some suspect character trait. Smiling nervously, I tried desperately to think only the purest, highest thoughts.

On the Polaroid I saw my head enveloped in colour, predominantly blue denotes trust and relaxation; whereas white means balance and spirituality. Great magenta streaks implied receptivity to new experiences — wishful thinking, perhaps. Aura photos are rather like horoscopes: fascinating in a more-or-less sort of way, but equally unreliable.

Churlish as it may sound, relaxing all day can become dull. It is here that the island comes into its own: Malta enjoys all the perks of a Mediterranean climate, and its small size means you are never far from the beautiful cities of Valletta or Mdina, or the many neolithic temples.

You leave the Athenaeum feeling you have been truly pampered — and, perhaps more importantly, that you deserve it. Sadly, the transformation I dreamt of never happened — but then the Athenaeum is a spa, not a miracle factory. Even so, I will be back for at least four months when I make my first million.

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How has Hong Kong fared since the changeover?

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AROUND THE WORLD

TRAVEL TIPS  
by JILL CRAWSHAW

TRAVEL JOURNALIST  
OF THE YEAR



High life  
in Hanoi

USING new lower-priced flights to Vietnam — they now cost as little as £469 return to Hanoi and Saigon with Singapore Airlines — Regent Holidays (0117-921 1711) can organise city tours of Saigon and Hanoi combined with visits to the Mekong Delta or to villages near the Laos border, staying with local families.

A four-day stay in Saigon followed by two days in the Delta with sightseeing by car or sampan costs £254 (plus air fares). A similar arrangement in Hanoi, where Ho Chi Minh must be turning in his mausoleum at the gourmet restaurants, five-star hotels and golf course, costs £305 for six days.

WILL Helena Bonham Carter's new film, *The Wings of the Dove*, do for tourism in Venice what *A Room with a View* did for Florence? Venetian Apartments (0181-678 1130) which leased flats there for director Iain Softley and crew during last July, claims that renting private flats can be cheaper than staying in a hotel — and after paying more than £11 for a meagre continental breakfast in the Daniell Hotel, I am inclined to agree.

A small studio sleeping two, situated a couple of minutes from San Marco, can be rented for £425 per property per week. For £1,075, up to five holidaymakers can rent the whole first floor of the small Santa Caterina palazzo, with two grand piazzas and canal views. Those with even grander tastes can hire the main floor of a Grand Canal palazzo, complete with maid service and private boat. Expect to



Moveable feast: bicycles serve as market stalls for the fruit vendors in Hanoi, which now boasts gourmet restaurants and five-star hotels

pay around £6,000 for up to ten people. Flights are not included.

Veggie value

BRITAIN gets a pat on the back from vegetarian author Annemarie Weizel for its efforts to improve catering standards for vegetarians and vegans. The twelfth edition of her *Vegetarian Visitor 1998 - Where to Stay and Eat in Britain* (Jon Carpenter, £2.50) lists 130 cafes, pubs and restaurants that cater seriously for vegetarians and vegans. As it says, these "simply couldn't have survived a few years ago, when providing such food was considered a chore and a nuisance".

Low in the charts are Portugal, Spain, Italy and Eastern Europe. In the USA and countries with a

Muslim population such as Turkey, India or Singapore, vegetarians fare much better. *Vegetarian Visitor* can be ordered on 01689 870437.

Read all about it



IN THE shopping area of Heathrow's Terminal Two, Books Etc. has come up with an extremely civilised way to pass flight delays and avoid the tedium of airport shopping queues. It has just opened a coffee shop so that passengers can browse-and-buy and read-and-relax while waiting for their flight announcements. We hope that more are planned.

Seats for sale

INSPIRATIONS, now part of the American-based Carlson Leisure Group, is trumpeting its seat-only programme FBI (Flights by Inspirations) launched last week under the banner "Quality, Value, Service". Hopefully it will be able to add "Punctuality" to the motto, since about 85 per cent of the flights are with Caledonian Airways and subsidiary Peach Air, whose record on delays is... well, suspect.

"Our worst year was 1996," admits a spokesman, "with operational problems when we were let down by British Airways engineering. In 1997 there was a significant improvement, and this year our engineering will be handled by a different company. We've also

putting two Tri-Stars on standby, and adding two new Airbus to the fleet." The new features include a Platinum Service for an extra £15 per adult, £5 per child, which gives superior meals with wine, two aperitifs, free headsets and newspapers. Pre-bookable seats are available at £5 per adult and £2 per child. FBI (01293 579579) offers return flights from £89-£209 to Malaga, Alicante and Faro (tax included) and from £69-£99 for long-stay flights on selected dates.

*Jill Crawshaw is the first winner of the new Travel Journalist of the Year Award, presented by the Association of Independent Tour Operators this week. The judges said her work exemplified all they were looking for — good writing, relevance to the consumer, wit and independence.*



THOSE of you determined to visit Egypt should take advantage of Seafarer's (0177-234 0500) seven-night Nile cruise for £369 per person. The price includes full board accommodation, excursions, return flights, transfers and taxes. Departs from Heathrow on Thursday, January 15.

WINTER is the best time to visit Morocco: Hayes and Jarvis (0181-222 7800) is offering seven nights' B&B at the Hotel Oudaya in Marrakesh, for £374 per person, and at the Hotel Les Ombres in Agadir, seven nights' B&B is £334 per person. Both offers include return flights, taxes and transfers, departing on Saturday, January 17.

KEEP up with the Blues: Elite Vacations (0181-864 4431) has a range of offers at hotels on La Digue in the Seychelles. Five nights' B&B, including return flight from Gatwick, UK departure tax and transfers, costs from £629 per person; 12 nights' B&B is from £1,115. Departs this Wednesday and next Sunday.

CANT get by without a visit to the Caribbean this winter? Cruise line MSC (0171-637 2525) still has availability on its Western Caribbean cruise departing on Tuesday. Visiting Playa Del Carmen, Cozumel, Grand Cayman, Ochos Rios, Santa Domingo,

Grand Turks and Key West, eleven nights' full board is from £945 per person, including return flights from Heathrow to Miami, transfers and all port and airport taxes.

VALENTINE'S Day need not be the only excuse for a romantic weekend: Kirker Holidays (0171-231 3333) is offering three nights' B&B at the Hotel Quirinale in Rome for £309 per person. The price includes flights from Gatwick, car transfer on arrival and rail ticket return to airport plus a tour. Alternatively, four nights' B&B at the Hotel Londres in Madrid is £212 per person. Return flights from Gatwick and transfers are included. Daily departures this week.

TRADEWINDS (0870-751 0003) is offering four nights' accommodation at the Hampton Inn, Bangkok, combined with four nights at either Pattaya, Hua Hin, Phuket or Koh Samui, from £499 per person. Departing from Heathrow daily from Monday, or from Manchester on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the price includes return flights, transfers and taxes, but not meals.

TRY your luck on the slopes with Crystal (0181-399 5144). Seven nights' half-board at a hotel or catered chalet, including return flights from Gatwick, Birmingham or Manchester, tax and transfers cost from £179 per person to Bulgaria and from £199 to Andorra. Resorts will be allocated on arrival.

JOANNA HUNTER

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**Shack attack in Goa**

EXCESSIVE police action has upset tourists and locals as the high season gets under way in Goa, one of the most popular winter-sun destinations, *Jill Crawshaw* writes.

The cause is the police effort to stamp out the sometimes unlicensed "shacks", the much-loved beach restaurants where tourists can enjoy a whole feast of local specialties for less than £3 — all of which would cost at least twice as much in resort hotels.

In Caveolissim, a quiet family resort in the south with only a handful of shacks, witnesses report that during the week before Christmas, police were abusive and may have been drunk when they closed down the shacks.

Local shack-owners claim that hotel corporations have been leaning on the police to eliminate the competition and force tourists to take the long, hot walk back to their hotel for an expensive and inferior mid-day meal.

The Goa Department of Tourism states that police were ordered by the courts to close 281 unauthorised shacks that had sprung up on various beaches. While the proliferation of the shacks may need control, Goa itself will be the loser if it is turned into yet another enclave of all-inclusive hotel ghettos.

And angry scenes on the beaches are not a good advertisement for tourism.

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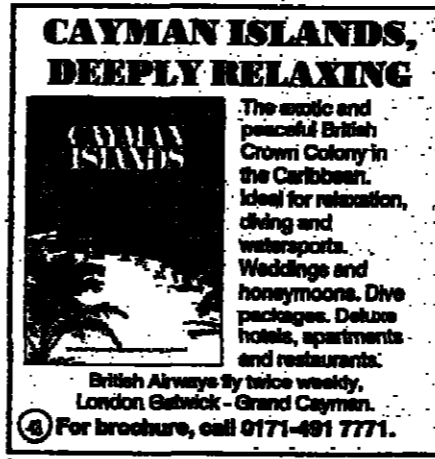
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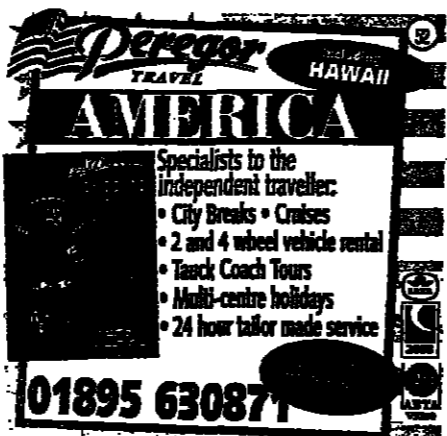
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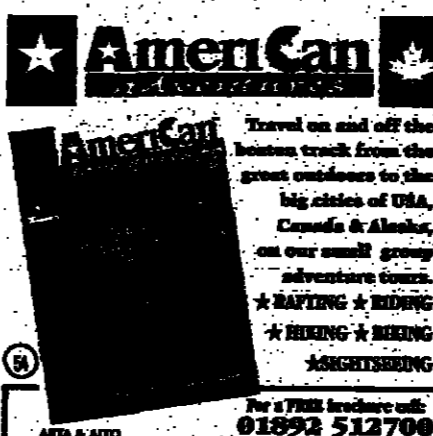
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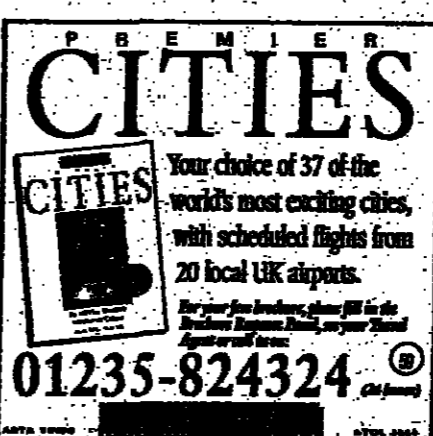
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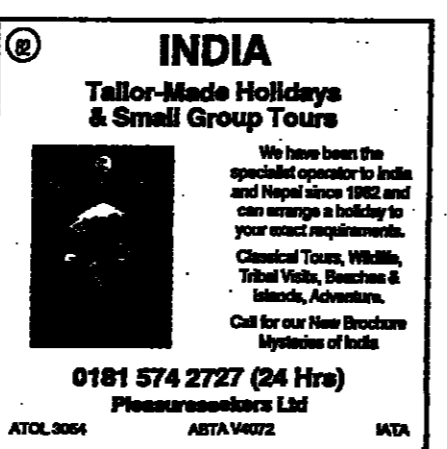
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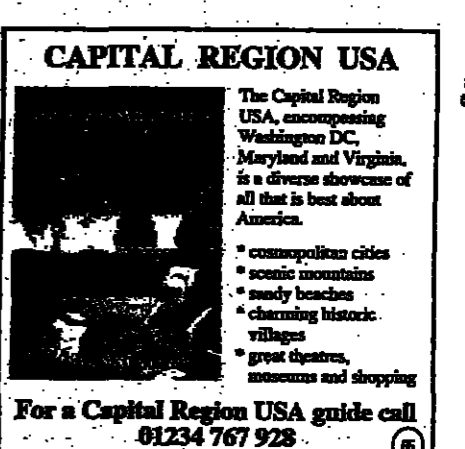
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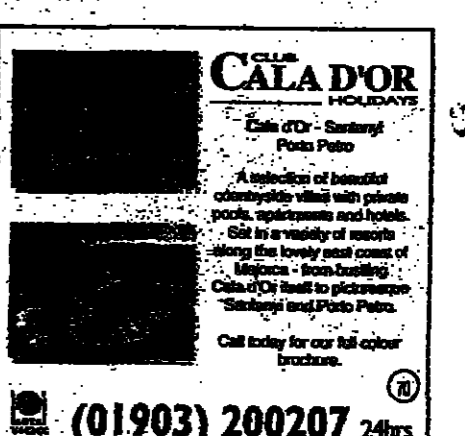
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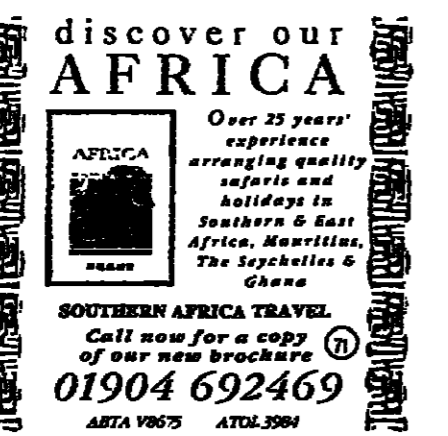
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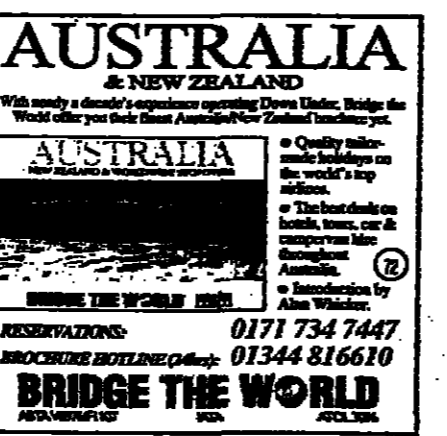
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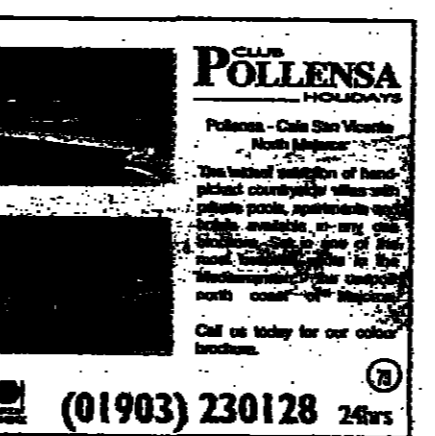
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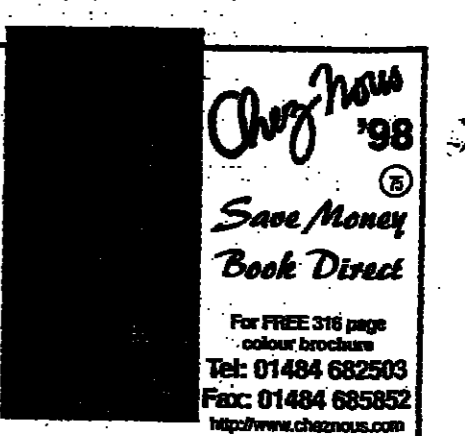
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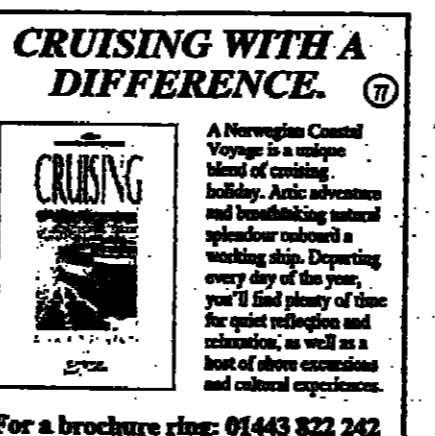
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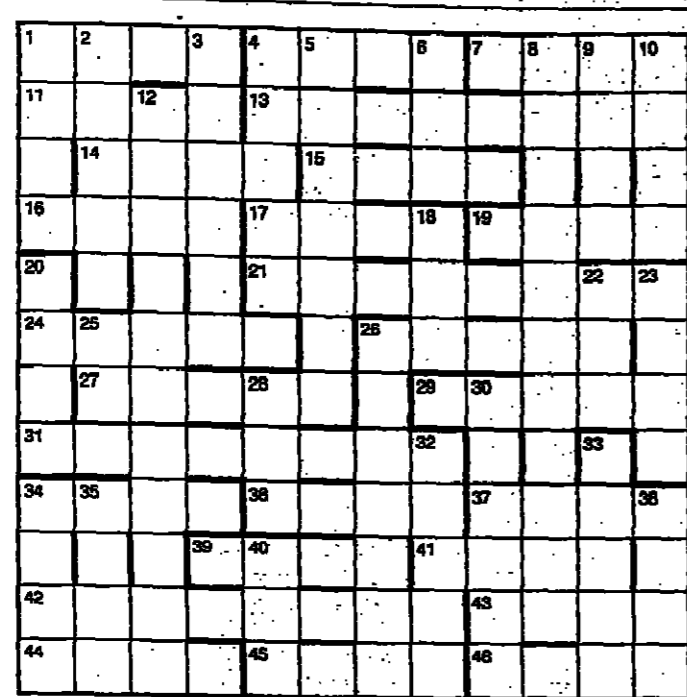


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مكتبة السفر

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3444: 8 DOWN 12 DOWN by Machiavelli



LISTENER CROSSWORD No 3444 in association with Waterstone's

Cut out and send the completed crossword and coupon above to The Listener Crossword No 3444, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE, by Thursday, January 22.

Waterstone's logo and promotional text: 'The winner will receive a Waterstone's book worth £75. Five runners-up will each receive a book token worth £10.'

THE 26 across lights are words that are formed by removing the next-to-last letter (in each case a different letter of the alphabet) from a longer word. The across clues contain a one-word definition of the light that needs to be entered at that number, but belong as a whole to the longer word (to which the figures in brackets refer) that is used to form an across light elsewhere.

- CROSS
1 Answering letters induces spasms (5)
4 After end of rubber, East appears to be equal in score - 'Not again!' is heard (5)
7 Fences with retired divine wearing a sort of corse (5)
11 To some extent, craft is employed in journey regularly (6)
13 Obstacles making native servant girls disheartened (5)
14 Ghost left after rather violent argument started (5)
15 Batsman at number five - thus out of order - in a frenzy (5)
16 Pipe damaged after extreme glandular disorder (6)
17 Splits (under the law) lake water between army and society (6)
19 In Australia, red is almost green (5)
21 Legal decision establishing precedents firmly evokes the wildest applause (5)
24 Abroad I stuck to my man (5)
26 Salmon no longer shelters eleventh element, generating fifth (5)
27 Arab in Algeria - one who uses patterns and cloth? (5)
29 American greeting cards - a clutch (5)
31 Vessel accepts fine signals (5)
34 In France and Sweden, 'Cheese it' as an interjection shows moral significance (5)
36 Medal hung about a scholar, one who might lurk in the grass (5)
37 Dress fish - begin with a bit of elbow-grease (5)
39 Mid-morning - time to keep mum about notes (6)
41 Between times receive the central output of Network Nine (5)
42 Tree, a writer who's been abridged (5)
43 Want to change ending, since poles have been removed (9)
44 Many a trumpet put back in water barrel (5)
45 Without children to hurt, gave information (5)
46 With many pot-holes, fool loses his footing - tut-tut! (5)
DOWN
1 Shed built from timber British Rail discarded (4)
2 Scots spake out, 'You're another Canadian head case' (5)
3 Most scanty thesis needs reworking (6)
4 Young woman with children's complaint (5)
5 Unburdens mind and soul in torment (7)
6 Dry wet valley up (3)
8 Title (11)
9 Like an old woman, short of energy and blue (4)
10 In some places, timorous navy thrush is missing, see! (4)
12 Title (11)
18 Verse due for recital (3)
20 Shut mineral in box (4)
22 Tree snake (5)
23 Prince (later king) becomes President of America (4)
25 Basque separatists up to mischief (3)
26 People in authority must accept blame for treatment (7)
28 Tax took all I had (3)
30 Excitedly greets poet's entry (6)
32 Ship retains independent engineers for generators (5)
33 Car due in six seconds from Yemen (5)
34 Sudden efforts when speaking causes strain (4)
35 Far removed from continental matrimonial (4)
38 Part of the heavens the astronomers keep dark (4)
40 Although cut down, it's a long robe (3)

The solution grid and notes for Christmas Puzzle by Smokey will be published in Weekend on January 17

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

DISCARDING is one of the most taxing parts of the game. Few players relish it, though you'd have thought that if you enjoyed bridge you would enjoy all aspects of it.

Bridge hand diagram showing Dealer South, Game all, IMPs, and a card layout with suits and ranks.

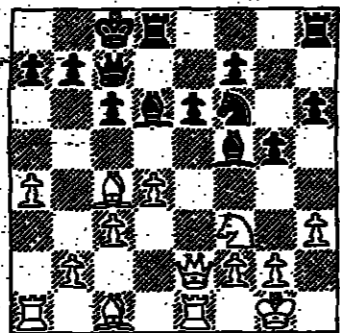
The above auction was typical. At our table Brian Senior was the declarer. On the opening spade he put in the eight from dummy, in case West had lead from A9xxx.

- WORD ANSWERS
Answers from page 40
MESHUGA
(a) Mad, crazy, stupid. From the Yiddish meshuga, Hebrew shagag to go astray or wander. 'Going steady' What kind of a meshuganah idea is this?
TWO BRAINS.
Answers from page 40
Question 1: AND + 498. Each new word adds one to the original value of a letter.
Question 2: Murder is the appropriate collective noun
KUKANG
(c) The slow loris, Nycticebus couacang, found in south-east Asia.
LOTONG
(c) A leaf monkey of the genus

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

IN SPITE of doubts about the validity of the format of the Fide (World Chess Federation) Championship in Groningen and Linares as a 'reliable means' of determining the world champion, one hearing aspect was the excellent performance of the two top British grandmasters, Nigel Short and Michael Adams.



Adams, in particular, has enhanced his reputation, drawing his main match with Short and finally striking in the speed play-offs. In terms of British players, his prize, well in excess of \$300,000, is second only to that won by Short in his match against Kasparov in 1993.

14 Ne5 Nd5 15 a5 16 Ne3 h5 17 Bd2

White: Short Black: Adams Fide World Championship Groningen, December 1997 Caro-Kann Defence

18 Bb3 Kb8 19 c4 Nf4 20 Nxf4 Bxf4 21 Be3

The Caro-Kann is Adams's favourite defence against the king's pawn opening. In earlier games between the two Short had wheeled out his favourite 3 e5, but had made little impression. Now he resorts to the old main line.

21 ... g4 22 h4 g3 23 B3

The alternative is 5 Ng5, as played by Deep Blue against Kasparov.

24 ... Bxc2 25 Qxc2 f5 26 Rad1 Qe7 27 Bd2 Bxd2 28 Qxd2 Qxh4 29 Qe3 f4 30 Qe5+ Kxh8 31 Rxd2 Qh2+ 32 Kf1

This move exposes White's set-up as too passive. A trap to avoid, though, is 7 ... Bf5 when 8 Qh3 forks b7 and f7.

29 ... Rhes 24 Be2

This looks feeble but Short was clearly worried about the variation 8 Nb3 Bg4 when 9 Bdf7 Kd7 10 Ne5 fails to 10 ... Qxe5 11 dxe5 Bxd1 and Black wins a piece.

31 ... Qh1+ 32 Kf2 Qxg2+ 34 Kd1 Qd3+ 35 Ke2 h4

Adams has delayed castling - 12 Qe2 0-0-0

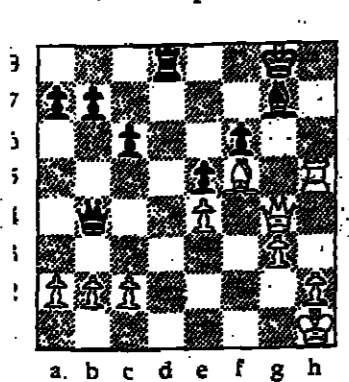
White cannot avoid a massacre.

The move ... h6 was a preparation for a menacing advance of Black's kingside pawns.

32 ... Qh1+ 33 Ke2 Qxg2+ 34 Kd1 Qd3+ 35 Ke2 h4

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene Chess Correspondent



WHITE to play. This position is from the game Petrosian - Moldagaliyev, USSR 1969.

How did White mount a mating attack on Black's chronically weak light squares?

The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society - Answers on a postcard please addressed to Winning Move competition, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The answer will be published next Saturday. Solution to last week's competition: 1 Rg4! The winner is B. Swinger, of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott

THE BBC sports quiz Result, Essex Interactive's IQ Test and Microsoft's Bookshelf, provided the questions for our Moët & Chandon challenge.



Clockwise: Pavarotti, Richards, Edwards, Ali, Picasso, Waugh

I have already waxed lyrical about Result, fronted by the dashing Desmond Lynam. Run in its entirety, IQ Test is a 30-minute programme with which you can determine your IQ value. You can find out more from Essex Interactive's Web site (http://www.essexinteractive.com).

The third title was the British reference collection of Microsoft Bookshelf. This compendium includes Chambers Dictionary, Bloomsbury Treasury of Quotations and Roget's Thesaurus.

NEW SOFTWARE

THE BEST just got better still in Quake II, the ultimate title so far in the first-person perspective genre.



Quake II: masterful makeover

You run, swim and crawl around 3D worlds, blasting your way through heavily-fortified military installations to lower a city's defences and shut down its war machine. To do this you amass a suitably mean arsenal along with health and the odd bomb. But there are more layers to the action than you might expect. Your enemies fight back but not just with weapons. Now they have acute artificial intelligence and will evade your attacks by ducking and diving bullets and bombs or heading for strategic attack locations to give themselves the upper hand whenever possible.

Before calculating a journey, you can decide on the details to tailor it perfectly to your needs. If you wanted you could ask for routes which avoid all motorways and main roads, or allow time for scheduled stops and rest breaks while travelling. Routes are calculated in a matter of seconds.

This is a finely honed product. The blend of fast graphics and great ambient sounds means that the experience steps out of the screen to meet you. Quake II is a slick game oozing originality and chutzpah. It is another winner for id Software and its new UK distributor Activision. In multiplayer mode, up to 32 can compete in the Deathmatch via LAN and over the Internet.

The title is based on 143,000 miles of roads in England, Scotland and Wales with more than 4,000 sights and attractions picked out along the way (850 golf clubs, 130 football grounds, 240 museums and so on). A further 900 listings from the Les Routiers hotel and restaurant guide feature, as well as 250 camp sites taken from the Alan Rogers Good Camps Guide. There are also 450 scenic photographs to call up, plus nine thoroughly satisfying 360-degree panoramas.

Verdict: 9 out of 10. Masterful sequel to a magnificent title. £34.99.

Verdict: 9 out of 10. Britain's best route planner gets a facelift. £59.99.

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Leisure Direction logo and contact information for the Paris offer, including phone number 0181-324 4003 and website details.

CROSS WORDS

Answers from page 40 Oslo, Libyan, Bath and Wells, pins and needles, Annie, omens, iff

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

Q For several years I have received computer-produced, duplicated seasonal letters from two unconnected friends with a space after the initial "Dear" for the name to be written in. The following letters have been pleasant, with all the family news, and end with handwritten signatures. Sometimes there is a short handwritten personal note at the end. In the past, the senders have expressed guilt about these letters, with references to writers' cramp and shortage of time, but now they seem to have got over these guilty feelings and have dropped any apologies for generally circulated, duplicated letters for all friends. I cannot help feeling rather offended having been friends for many years and wonder how to convey my feelings. — Pauline Rayment, Essex.

A I share your disapproval of these seasonal round robin letters. They are deeply impersonal and quite selfish, as they refer only to the sender. Worse, they show an unattractive degree of conceit in assuming that absolutely everybody is equally interested in the stunning news that the kitchen has been painted a fabulous shade of pony pink, that a child put in an Olympian performance at sports day, and that Tibbles, poor pussycat, has had fleas again. As far as conveying your feelings to your friends, adopt the continental custom of sending a new year card, accompanied by a beautifully written letter, in which you apologise for not writing sooner, explaining that composing special letters to everybody does indeed take time, but that you would not have it any other way. Let's hope that they get the hint.

Q I have a friend who has decided, now that he has retired and isn't anything else in particular, that he is eccentric. This affected condition has manifested itself in many ways. The point is that he and his wife do not now return supper invitations — presumably because he thinks that would not be eccentric. They must be a dozen in the red with various friends. What is really galling is he doesn't bat an eyelid at accepting the next one. She makes the right noises — "you must come round to see us soon, etc." — but nothing ever materialises. Do you have a remedy for cases like this? A lot of people would be very grateful. — E. Roda Bolster, Sunbury

A The behaviour you describe is not unknown among retired men. These individuals sometimes take the selfish view that, as they have done their bit in life, it is time to cash in the social dividend and become passengers. Some people

are happy to indulge three peccadillos, but as you are not, I suggest you administer an effective remedy for the socially lazy: ostracism. When your friend realises that local social life is steaming on without him, convivial invitations *chez lui* should be sure to follow.

Q Having read your solution to the problem of giving back engagement rings in the case of divorce, I am prompted to ask you what the form is with wedding presents, should a marriage break up within a short time. There surely is an argument for them being returned to their senders. — A.T. Warnford, Hants.

A No. A wedding is viewed legally, ecclesiastically and socially as a *fait accompli*. Therefore, once a marriage ceremony has taken place, all presents given to a bride and groom become and remain their property, even in short-lived marriages. It is up to the couple concerned to decide how

to divide the booty, although it is usual for the bride to keep the presents given by her side and for the groom to do likewise.

Q Could you please enlighten me as to the correct way of holding a knife at table? I was brought up on the continent, where the knife is held like a pencil, resting on the middle finger and secured between the thumb and the index finger, with the end of the knife handle protruding over the back of the hand. I have been told that, in England, the knife is held with the thumb and index finger, supported underneath by the middle finger, but with the end of the handle resting against the encasing palm and therefore not visible. — Mrs I. King, Claygate, Surrey.

A You have been correctly informed. In Britain, holding your knife like a pencil is still considered poor form.

Q You recommend that the host should order on behalf of his guests but make no mention of any consideration being given to guests' preferences. Far too many hosts have the conceit that they know best and tend to assume that everyone's tastes are similar to their own. I, and many of my friends, consider such behaviour highly insulting and the height of bad manners. — R. Greenfield, Tring, Herts.

A When I wrote that the host should order on behalf of his guests I was not implying that he should impose his will on them, but merely to convey their choices to the waiter. I apologise for any misunderstanding caused.

John Morgan is Associate Editor of GQ



WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

NULLO  
a. Not Bloody Likely!  
b. A type of bridge  
c. A white-faced clown

KUKANG  
a. A large knife  
b. An executive game  
c. A slow loris

LOTONG  
a. A lotus sarong  
b. A Chinese gangster  
c. A leaf monkey

MESHUGA  
a. Mad  
b. Genuine  
c. Dumpling soup

Answers on page 39

TWO BRAINS

By Raymond Keene

THE human memory can be quite astounding. Hiroyuki Goto (born 1973) of Tokyo, Japan, has memorised a staggering 42,195 digits of the number Pi, reciting them at the MHK Broadcasting Centre on February 18, 1995. The record I know of for memorisation of Pi in England is held by Creighton Carvello, with 20,013 digits. I would be interested to learn of any authenticated claim to have broken this record.

Question 1:  
If ENGLAND = 4623165  
LEG = 453  
DANGLE = 738456  
what does AND equal?

Question 2:  
Pride is to lions as ? is to crows?

Answers on page 39

CROSS WORDS

by Brian Greer

One of the best-known of early cryptic clues is City in Czechoslovakia (4). This exemplifies in minimal form the combination of definition, inclusion indicator and including word or words that constitutes a "hidden" clue. The structure of such clues is hard to conceal, so they should be used sparingly, and our convention is not to have more than one in any puzzle. (It was pointed out that I had broken this rule in the puzzle I contributed for last year's Crossword Championship.) A variety of words and phrases may be used to imply containment, such as "taking part in", "hiding in", "concealing", "encompassed by". The art is to make a

sentence that reads smoothly and makes sense. Sometimes an "LIT" effect may be obtained, as in: It is used in Tripoli by a native (6). Occasionally, a longer word or phrase can be treated in this way, the best examples being Some job at hand? We'll soon see (4,3,5) and Sensation concealed by Chopin, Sand — needlessly (4,3,7). Several variants are possible. Inclusion can be combined with reversal, as long as both are indicated, thus Maiden in the inn answered back (9). The occasional double inclusion may be perpetrated. Warnings, repeatedly from women, so men sing (6). One final twist: Row back and forth in best if fitter (4).

Next Wednesday is the centenary of the death of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, who would surely have been one of the greatest cryptic crossword composers if the form had been invented in his lifetime; indeed, given his creativity, it is perhaps surprising that he did not invent it himself. When choosing his pseudonym, he considered anagrams such as Edgar Cuthwells, but the final choice was created by a complex process involving a Latinised form of his forenames, Carolus Ludovicus, transformed into Lewis Carroll. He will be the subject of next week's column. The writer is Crossword Editor of The Times. See answers on page 39

PICTURE LINE



READERS are invited to suggest what Hillary and Bill Clinton, pictured during a family holiday in the Virgin Islands, might be saying to each other.

This picture will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted.

Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, E1 9XN. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, January 14.

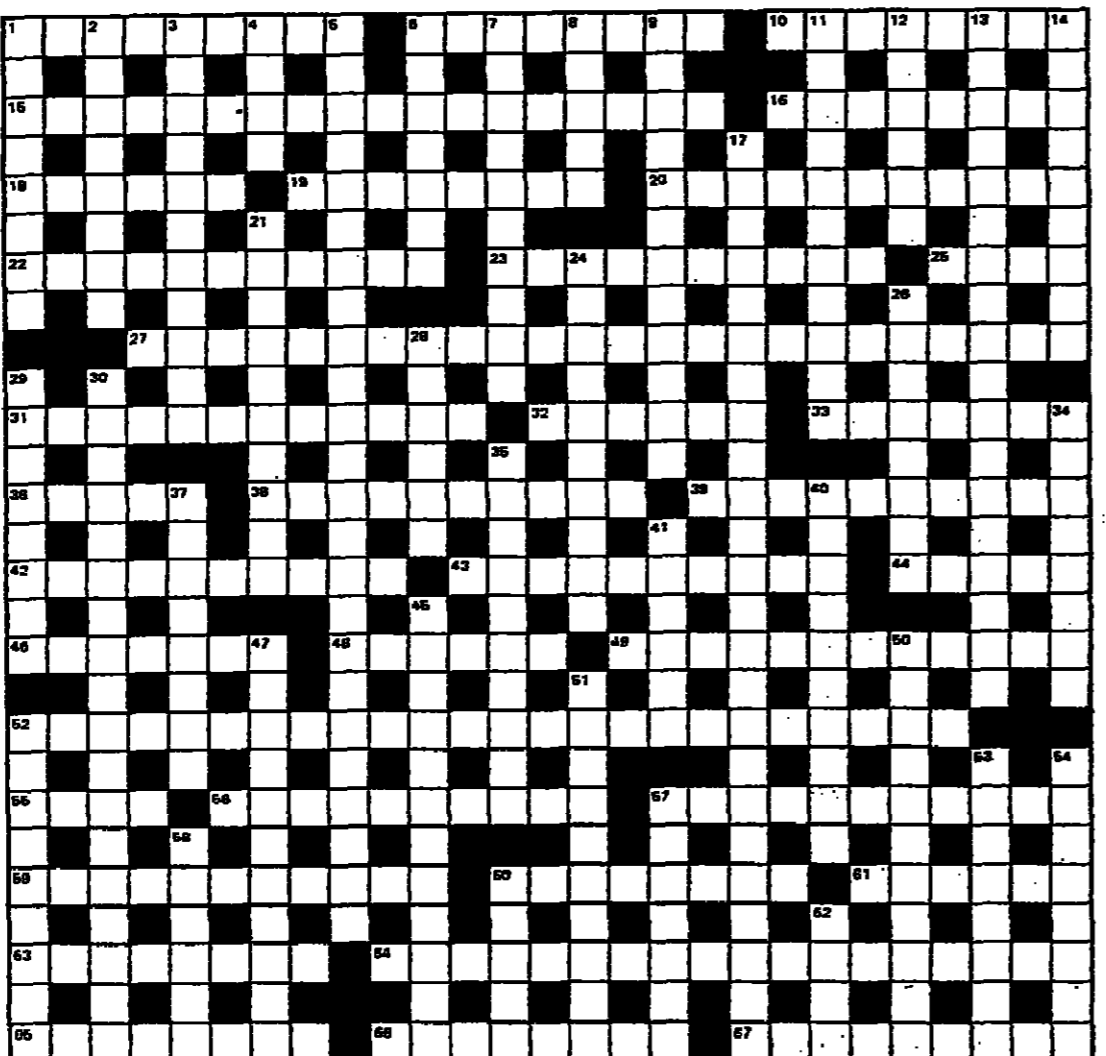
Last week's winning caption, left, was submitted by Mrs Audrey Lancaster, of Ruslip, London.



JUMBO CROSSWORD 146



The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from black resin with a gold-plated clip, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to: Jumbo Crossword 146, The Times 1 Pennington Street London E1 9XN to arrive by Thursday January 22. The name of the winner will be published in Weekend on Saturday, January 24



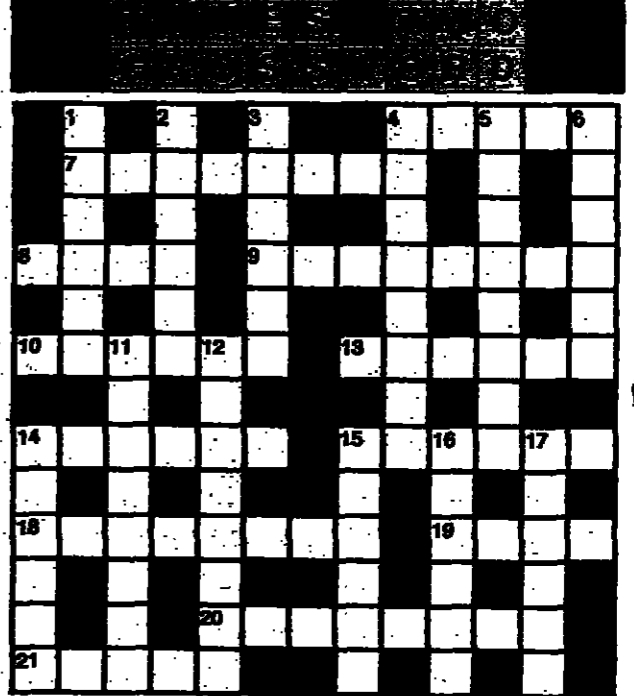
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ACROSS

- 1 Does it shed light on some showy plant's origin? (5,4)
- 6 Be more successful than unpopular hunting party (8)
- 10 In the scrub, a bush kangaroo's found granny's seat? (8)
- 15 The self-opinionatedness of lesser mortals? (11,7)
- 16 Stiffing whine, once seeing richness displayed (8)
- 18 Man introducing new railway's milks — electrical (6)
- 19 I pictured my mother as a distinguished chairwoman (9)
- 20 The ball's arranged in such a round about manner (11)
- 22 Vixen set out — see how one covers a large area (11)
- 23 Almost reject neat composition, lacking physical presence (10)
- 25 Love to be covered in honour — it's in the wind (8)
- 27 Reverse normal procedure to do an anagram for orchestra (3,3,4,6,3,5)
- 31 Accept one's marching orders, before sloping off, perhaps (8,4)
- 32 Ask if one's out of fit (6)
- 33 Dissolute rake has a go-ahead to interrupt pub's entertainment (7)
- 36 Precious time given to fledgling's appeal (5)
- 38 Instructive from the press to produce an agenda (5-5)
- 39 They look after their record collections (10)
- 42 One originally capitalised on using the correct form of words (6,4)
- 43 Rejecting quarter of tyrant's description? (10)
- 44 As one has cash in hand... (5)
- 46 ... become more hopeful of 36 importing footballers (5,2)
- 48 Cavalryman in a rut, troubled about son (6)
- 49 Specified cover available for retired people (12)
- 52 Check an Arab presented for dental inspection, and reject beneficial treatment? (4,1,4,5,2,3,5)
- 55 Pained expression, finding no small change in pocket (4)
- 56 Remain embarrassed about Oscar — in a state, after mile-up (10)
- 57 Conduct a survey of military installations? (11)
- 59 Man's chosen to have tonic, perhaps, after the theatre (5,2,4)
- 60 Christian dissident (8)
- 61 Put windows in, having left out most of front in summer-house (6)
- 63 One cardinal's no good — ruined in nasty shower! (4,4)
- 64 Painstaking correction done by one of the old school (8,10)
- 65 Variable tempo I put in orchestral piece (4,4)
- 66 Supporter hadn't messed about before (8)
- 67 Using the net? In particular, dad's going to conserve energy (9)

DOWN

- 1 Alarm Tories in Cambridge aren't (8)
- 2 Resemblance, if faint, may develop over years (8)
- 3 A bloomer appearing in the "Wessex Yearbook" (5,4)
- 4 Formally supported by firm abandoning discount voucher (4)
- 5 As squirrels appear, going quickly after the rest? (6-4,3,5-6)
- 6 Booked a fantastic cruise round Greek islands? (7)
- 7 Members of lodge try to reform obstinate old fogey (10)
- 8 Extraordinarily energetic, and possibly extravagant publicist (5)
- 9 Was previously in debt — first sets of deliveries rather steady (1,2)
- 11 A track a hippy almost recognised for slouch party member (11)
- 12 Offer freedom from distress? (6)
- 13 Turned up evidence of growth appearing under one's nose (8,9)
- 14 A source of energy recently analysed — not right type of gas (9)
- 17 Minister changing tack's giving a speech (10,2,3,9)
- 21 Minor convenience provided for Robin's colleague (6,4)
- 24 Affectionate glance at congregation — most of diocese okay? (6,4)
- 26 Look into how he reversed into any available space (8)
- 28 Look up to pay one's respects (6)
- 29 Describing various elements in one's old theme (8)
- 30 Predictable result in state within Iron Curtain? (8,10)
- 34 Lamb! It's easy to cook — second helping? (8)
- 35 Hears tune, mostly adapted, when taking in an opera (10)
- 37 Chance to make a vital point in court (3-5)
- 40 Some years ago, they'd have been at least 25p (4-6)
- 41 Writing with reference to players' performance (6)
- 45 Practically, or very well-behaved? (2,4,2,4)
- 47 Prepare to use biological and physical perfection (5,2,4)
- 50 Working one's fingers to the bone (11)
- 51 Where Parisian lad entertains girlfriends? (4-1-5)
- 52 Firstly, Richard left one playing an organ (4-5)
- 53 Up late, wrapping present — it's highly delicate (8)
- 54 My stories appear on medium quality paper (8)
- 57 Band allowed to join "Hair" (7)
- 58 The French, on tour, went wild (3,3)
- 60 He's hiding quietly in a tree (5)
- 62 Make a lot of money (4)



No 1299

- ACROSS  
4 Wonderfuf an extra (5)  
7 Disorderly (8)  
8 Stare stupidly (4)  
9 Rebuke (8)  
10 Double-cross (6)  
13 Painful, very cold (6)  
14 Distant; aloof (6)  
15 One sleeping noisily (6)  
18 Careful study (8)  
19 Ice-hockey disc (4)  
20 Greek god of wine (8)  
21 Scot, river; Bonnie's partner (5)
- DOWN  
1 Harm, loss (6)  
2 Food basket; impede (6)  
3 Despicable; old sailors' disease (6)  
4 Sting-in-tail creature (8)  
5 Column on wall (8)  
6 Piece of bacon; more care-less (6)  
11 Audacity (5)  
12 Bent, facility (8)  
14 A yokel (6)  
15 Maxim (6)  
16 Resist; act against (6)  
17 Superfluity (6)

SOLUTION TO NO 1298  
ACROSS: 1 Visitor 5 Best 9 Shadow cabinet 10 Jet 11 Tremble 13 Assure 15 Whereas 18 Heroine 20 Jet 23 Little Boy Blue 24 Rest 25 Grandest  
DOWN: 1 Vest 2 Slate 3 Trotter 4 Nicerly 6 Ennobled 7 Tethered 8 Able 12 Bachelor 14 Stratus 16 Halcyon 17 Member 19 Idle 21 Solve 22 Pest

